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ABSTRACT

The 52 abstracts in these 29 serial issues describe innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the community college. Sample topics include reading motivation, barriers to academic success, the learning environment, writing skills, leadership in the criminal justice profession, role-playing strategies, cooperative education, distance education through compressed video, team teaching, study abroad programs, community development, programs for at-risk students, a checklist for hiring community college faculty, on-line testing, violence on campus, improving student performance, teaching logical fallacies, teacher education, workshop development, acquiring Internet skills, nursing, quilting as a learning supplement, basic grammar instruction, ESL instruction, self-assessment in public speaking, comics in the classroom, student-created course reviews, alternatives to traditional testing, collaborative journalism, and interdisciplinary technology. (AS)

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Innovation Abstracts

Volume 20, numbers 1-29, 1998

Suanne D. Roueche
Editor

Texas University, Austin
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VOLUME XX, NUMBER 1

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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Creating a Desire to Read

Many high school students have learned to hate to read. They dread the familiar, incomprehensible, and isolated reading tasks that have confounded them for years. By the time they reach the community college classroom, some students do not read at all. However, I have found that creating a desire to read is easy when students are allowed to make personal choices and to share what they read through writing, speaking, and listening. Over the course of a semester, I have students read three books of their choosing, along with others that are required. There are only two restrictions on the books they choose—they must be age-appropriate and relevant to them personally.

Some students choose to read books with subjects about which they possess background knowledge. One student chose a book about tracing family genealogy because he was interested in creating a personal family tree. Some students read books that have been recommended by their friends or have been made into movies. Many students who choose classic works, by authors such as Ernest Hemingway or Edgar Allan Poe, admit they did not read these required works in high school and have a unique opportunity to do so now.

Students are given 15 minutes to read at the beginning of each class. It is their time to relax. They are not being required to take notes, answer questions, or listen to teacher-talk immediately. This reading time gives them the chance to practice their reading, focus on only the simple act of reading for fun, and rediscover the personal enjoyment inherent in reading.

After students complete their books, they participate in a "book share." They each write a summary about the book's characters, settings, events, problems, resolutions, or goals. In this activity, they practice their summarizing skills in a more meaningful context than would be provided by textbook paragraph exercises, and the structure provides guidelines for students who may be tentative about what to do next. This two-page report is composed on a word processor in class. Students practice their writing and utilize computer software to aid development of their syntax, grammar, and mechanical skills. When they have finished their reports, they engage in peer review and revision. Peer-editing provides students with opportunities to practice reading, writing, thinking, and listening in a small-group, more comfortable setting.

When the students have completed the writing segment of the "book share," they participate in oral presentations. They talk informally about their books and practice speaking and presenting information; the audience practices listening. Many students approach "book share" time in the same relaxed manner they approach their in-class reading. They become comfortable with the process because they have multiple opportunities to approach it holistically—by practicing their reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

An additional benefit is that students actively engage in dialogues. Sometimes, they do not like the books they chose, and their classmates usually want to know *why*. They engage in debates about their books, reflect on their own thoughts, and practice inference techniques. Many students heed their peers' advice and read books that they recommend.

Students recover that initial joy that they felt in the primary grades when they learned to read. One student confessed, "I haven't read a book in six years. Now I have read three; I had forgotten how much fun it is." Many students have rediscovered the pleasures of reading and eliminated their feelings of dread. They can face the large number of required reading assignments in their other courses with more enthusiasm because they have rediscovered some of reading's inherent pleasures.

Stephanie Gaddy, *Instructor, Reading*

For further information, contact the author at Lincoln College, 300 Keokuk, Lincoln, IL 61656.

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An Interdisciplinary Technology Model that Works

A physics colleague and I joined forces to introduce our students to a broader range of disciplines than strict adherence to their program or degree courses would provide. I wanted my composition students to have access to computers, new software, and the Internet; my colleague wanted all students to have more exposure to math and science.

Together, we obtained a National Science Foundation grant for interdisciplinary technology and reform of undergraduate education. A large portion of that grant project focuses on syllabi revision which includes both technology and interdisciplinary components. Outgrowths of the revisions have been new and challenging lessons and activities.

For example, one of my English class assignments includes a new approach to analyzing Robert Frost's "Mending Wall." After reading and discussing the poem, students write an analysis which includes an examination of metaphorical language and theme, and a short analysis of the physics principle of entropy—a scientific term for a randomness in nature or a move toward disorganization of objects. To explain the rocks falling off of the fences, Frost blames "elves." Then he adds, "...not elves exactly." This line opens the door for a discussion of entropy, in layman's terms. And, this assignment involves an Internet search for information about New England rock fences. Students produce final copies of their papers on computers in our technology center.

In the introduction to her physics class, my colleague includes group problem solving on energy and velocity based on an excerpt from Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum," which deals with the dimensions of the man's prison and the behavior of the pendulum. She asks students to describe the maximum energy of the pendulum, the potential and kinetic energies, and the velocity of the honed edge at its most threatening position. Each group presents standard multiple representations: pictorial, symbolic, descriptive, and interdisciplinary. She emphasizes the vivid, descriptive detail used by Poe in his writings and instructs students to search the Internet for his story.

Results of our interdisciplinary technology activities have been positive. Students learn to use computers with more confidence and are introduced to the latest software. English students review each other's papers electronically. One of the most important results is that students expand their knowledge of scientific concepts and learn that relationships and connections exist among disciplines and between school work and real-life activities. Moreover, they develop problem-solving and group-work skills that will transfer to the workplace.

Other instructors have joined us in our mission to revise syllabi and have provided us with new activities and lessons which they are implementing in history, art, journalism, developmental math, and political science classes. Momentum is building, and we believe that the result is a better education for all students.

Lillian Cook, *Chair, Letters Division*

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Plan to be in
Austin, Texas
May 24-27, 1998
for
NISOD's International Conference on
Teaching and Leadership Excellence.

For information and registration,
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Creating a Climate for Excellence

In order to create classroom environment for maximum academic achievement, I ask my students to help create the goals and rules for their own success. In this problem-solving process, students structure their own climate for excellence. They discuss the following five characteristics and come to a consensus about each.

Step 1 - *Identity*. What type of group are we? To assure that our expectations are clear and mutual, I might ask: "Are we the Mormon Tabernacle Choir or sports fans in an arena?" Group discussion leads to a definition of identity that helps clarify our roles as learners and teachers.

Step 2 - *Goals*. Goals include the articulation of standards for excellence, assessment as means to achieve it, and commitment to helping all students achieve their personal best by sharing information and skills (e.g., research methods). Goal-setting leads naturally to the next step.

Step 3 - *Rules*. As we consider that every group has stated rules, or assumptions, I ask students to think about previous group experiences where mutual agreement on a rule would have made a positive difference (e.g., raising hands to indicate a readiness to speak). Typical rules that students consider important include reading the assignment before class, asking questions, respecting others, being open-minded, participating, and not interrupting. If a rule that I consider important has not been mentioned, I request it. Perhaps because students feel empowered, trusting, and trusted, I have never been refused.

Step 4 - *Leadership Style*. Responsibilities are clarified, and our role is defined.

Step 5 - *Acceptance*. I ask students to think about a group situation in which they did *not* feel accepted and the effect on their academic motivation and behavior. Students share their past frustrations, anger, confusion, plummeting esteem, and reluctance to participate or attend classes. We agree that very little learning can take place under such circumstances. I then ask students to reflect on a classroom in which they felt accepted and to share their thoughts and feelings. They verbalize their enthusiasm, and their willingness to risk, ask questions, be present, and share (teach and learn). I conclude that we can decide to extend acceptance to others and expect the same in return. When fear is reduced, mistakes are only responses-on-the-way-to-excellence. When structure facilitates goal-setting and achievement, motivation accelerates.

An enthusiastic vote completes the exercise, and we write the agreement together. I keep a copy in the class folder and remind students that we can revisit the model if difficulties arise or changes are needed. Engaging and empowering students for excellence succeeds. Not only does this clarification and motivational process work, but the model can be utilized to locate group problems and resolve them efficiently.

Other exercises for excellence have proven useful.

1. **Barriers to Academic Success.** This exercise increases awareness of factors that may interfere with achievement and encourages creative problem solving.

Students share events, people, situations, or conditions that are difficult or interfere most with their studies—e.g., family, friends, work, text, teacher, study skills, and self. Then they discuss typical problems in each category—e.g., spending too much time with friends, family, telephone interruptions, heavy work schedule, difficult text, and procrastination. I assign a specific problem from each category for small group work during which they follow these problem-solving procedures:

1. Name and work on one problem.
2. Brainstorm (no judgments, please).
3. Piggyback ideas.
4. Eliminate the obviously unworkable.
5. Choose one "solution" and try it.
6. Evaluate
   (a) it works (success)
   (b) it works fairly well but requires modification (brainstorm again)
   (c) it does not work, so choose again.

Group solutions—e.g., printing a study schedule (including acceptable times of phone calls) on the refrigerator and sticking to it until everyone accepts; speaking to your boss about modifying work hours; conferencing with a teacher; registering for a skills course or workshop—are written on the board.

Later, after they have worked on their problems, students report on their success or progress. Focusing,

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clarifying, and taking-charge efforts are applauded. Students share benefits of positive change to encourage and give direction to others. This is the first of many opportunities for students to take responsibility and solve problems.

2. **The Essence of Definition.** This exercise raises consciousness and demonstrates how to identify the essentials of a definition (meaning, significance, accuracy) as the basis for critical thinking , communication, and action. For example, I place a chair on my desk and ask, "What essential qualities must be present for this to be called a chair?" A series of refining questions and answers form the basis for new questions—e.g., Does it depend on construction and material? Must a chair have legs or simply some form of support? How many legs must it have? What does the object need in addition to some kind of support and a seat? What is it called if it does not have a back?

Then other material categories and conceptual qualities—e.g., competition and cooperation—are introduced. Students are challenged to reflect and to utilize resources and rational cognitive processes. I remind them that definition is the basis for comparing and contrasting, analyzing, etc., and is used by researchers to prepare accurate questionnaires and exams.

It is incredibly exciting to learn, create, and teach experiential exercises. Recently, one of my returning adult students came to my office for a visit and confessed, "I never knew how to think before. I always felt stupid. Now I feel smart. I know what I'm doing, and I love it!" I applauded his remarks. And, after he left, I cried.

Marion Hannigan, *Assistant Professor, Sociology*

For further information, contact the author at Niagara County Community College, 3111 Saunders Settlement Road, Sanborn, NY 14132.

Collaborative Journalism

I involve my first-year journalism classes in collaborative learning projects.

• After students select the individual news articles that they are to write, the entire class and I discuss the next steps. Students identify possible sources of information, questions to ask, and vital information to gather. Then, acting as a facilitator at the board, I ask, "What additional information may be pertinent to this article?" I write each idea on the board, not only to illustrate the value of the contribution but to allow sufficient time for students to take any notes that might pertain to their individual assignments. After several classes, a student takes over at the board.

The benefits are enormous. Not only is news coverage more thorough, but camaraderie improves. Students accept responsibility for helping class members develop their articles. A team surfaces. Communication blossoms.

• I leave letter files for each student (and one for me) on a table outside my office. Pens and note pads are available. When students have news tips that might be useful to others, they leave notes in the appropriate files during a change of classes or other free time. Sometimes newspaper clippings or magazine articles are attached to their notes. Ideas grow into spin-off stories. Students learn the value of sharing ideas, of learning together. I often see notes of encouragement with smiley faces.

• Students contribute to an article suggestion list with ideas for sidebars, related articles, and news stories. Less-experienced students feel comfortable scanning the list and choosing a single-lead assignment while advanced students select more challenging, in-depth stories.

• To develop the art of headline writing, I ask for a single word that best describes the essential story. At other times I ask that the story be condensed into a short sentence. Then with chalk and eraser in my hand, we build a headline together as a class, word by word. Students learn to accept constructive criticism as words are erased and replaced by others more powerful. Learning to write headlines can become fun sessions when occasional wild and wacky alliterations evoke chuckles and good-natured humor softens the pressure of deadlines.

People who can have fun together can work together. We have proved that they can learn together, too.

Rosalyn Pursley, *Cornerstone Advisor*

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Person-Environment Student Ratings of Instruction

Almost all student ratings of instruction are based upon common-sense items (nothing inherently wrong with that) that have been shown to be statistically reliable. This approach sounds good, but in many ways it is *not*. Common-sense, reliability-based ratings indicate only that a given instructor will receive similar evaluations across various classes.

In psychology classes and psychology-paired courses, I have introduced a person-environment approach to student ratings of instruction. The person-environment approach still measures student satisfaction with instruction, but it also provides valuable information on student learning development and productivity. In addition, the approach focuses on a variety of student-involvement measures.

The Problem

The problem with traditional reliability-based student ratings of instruction is that they do not directly determine whether anyone is really doing *good teaching*. Students may "enjoy" an instructor's teaching, but this does not mean that conditions associated with learning (both acquisition and internalization) are being provided. Even worse, an instructor who rates poorly on some items is not exactly sure what to do about making improvements in that area. Furthermore, some supervisors are not well-schooled in learning and teaching principles, and may not know how to counsel instructors effectively about their ratings.

A Solution

One solution to these problems is to move to a person-environment student rating of instruction. According to person-environment theory, learning, productivity, and satisfaction are the most important outcomes of the "fit" between the person and the environment. A person-environment rating of instruction has been developed to measure student learning, productivity, and satisfaction needs that are associated with the instructional environment. The Person-Environment Rating Scale for Instructors (Vandervert, 1997) measures 21 student needs and matches 21 objective conditions in the classroom or other instructional environments which can meet student needs.

Immediate Advantages

Advantages of using the Person-Environment Rating Scale for Instructors include:

- Knowing that your student ratings of instruction are actually related to the learning-productivity and satisfaction-fit between your students and your instructional environment
- Knowing what to do to improve areas of teaching
- Knowing how to fine-tune the learning environment for each type of classroom situation
- Providing your supervisor with information that will be useful in formulating agreement about how you might improve student learning and your student ratings
- Gaining insight into the person-environment dynamics that lead to the development of a productive college learning community.

Conclusion

In addition to providing understandable and highly useful student ratings of instruction, the person-environment approach has enabled me to identify student-classroom-needs patterns. This is valuable information for planning student involvement in the instructional environment, especially in paired-courses which are group-intensive.

Larry R. Vandervert, *Instructor, Psychology*

Selected sections of the Person-Environment Rating Scale for Instructors appear on page two of this abstract. For further information, a copy of the scale that includes the rating protocol, and a simple computer program which will provide a printout of the scales and numerical degree of person-environment fit, contact the author at Spokane Falls Community College, 3410 W. Fort George Wright Drive, Spokane, WA 99204-5288. e-mail: larryv@sfcc.spokane.cc.wa.us

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First, students are asked to indicate what they would like the classroom or other instructional setting to be like (student needs). Later, students are asked to rate the instructional environment provided by the course (course instructional environment).

Student Needs

How important are the following items in your ideal class? (That is, what would you like this class to be like?) Rate each of the following items on a scale of 1-5 (1 is the most important).

In my *ideal* class, I could (or would):

1. Make use of my abilities.
2. Get a feeling of accomplishment.
3. Feel actively involved all the time.
4. Be able to improve my standing.
5. Lead other students in what to do.
6. Receive fair treatment in the way the class plan is put into practice.
7. Earn grades equal to the effort expended.
8. Make friends easily with other students.
9. Try out some of my ideas.
10. Work independently of others.
11. Do things that are okay with my beliefs (my beliefs would be given consideration).
12. Get recognition for the work I do.
13. Use my own judgment.
14. Feel that the class relates to real life.
15. Be helpful to other students.
16. Be "somebody" in the class.
17. Get individual help from the instructor.
18. Receive special explanations on about problems or difficult concepts.
19. Do different kinds of exercises and assignments from time to time.
20. Have good physical learning conditions.
21. Plan my work with some help.

Course Instructional Environment

To what degree are the following items descriptive of this class? (That is, what is this class like?) Rate each of the following items on a scale of 1-5 (1 is the most descriptive).

Students in this class:

1. Make use of their abilities.
2. Get a feeling of accomplishment.
3. Are able to feel actively involved all the time.
4. Have a chance to improve their standing.
5. Have a chance to lead other students.
6. Receive fair treatment in the way the class plan is put into practice.
7. Receive grades that are equal to the effort expended.
8. Are easy to make friends with.
9. Try out some of their own ideas.
10. Work independently of others.
11. Do things that are okay with their beliefs (their beliefs are given consideration).
12. Receive recognition for the work they do.
13. Have a chance to use their own judgment.
14. Feel that this class is related to their future.
15. Are helpful to other students.
16. Can be "somebody."
17. Get individual help they need from the instructor.
18. Receive special explanations on hard problems or difficult concepts.
19. Do different types of exercises and assignments from time to time.
20. Have good physical learning conditions.
21. Plan their work with little help.

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The Paraphrase Paper: A Multi-Purpose Assignment

Several years ago I introduced a paraphrase essay into my basic composition course. The original purpose of the paper was to give students the opportunity to write a relatively simple composition using an outside source, but the assignment accomplishes much more. It is a valid tool with which students can develop such skills as reading comprehension, use of academic tone, vocabulary and sentence-structure variety, in-text source citation, correctness in writing, and scholastic integrity. Thus, the assignment has value across the curriculum.

Description of the Unit

First, students read and discuss a reading assignment. "Understanding Music" by Aaron Copeland and "How to Read Faster" by Bill Cosby are both tightly structured essays with clear introductions, conclusions, and body points; both have worked well as the basis for the paper in my basic composition classes. Teachers in other disciplines can use sections of the course text or any material they wish their students to learn.

After my students study the process of paraphrasing as well as the use of in-text citations, I give them an essay skeleton—which I have written—consisting of an introduction, topic sentences for paragraphs of development, and a conclusion. This framework sets the academic tone which the students must adopt for the rest of the essay and provides models of in-text source citation, punctuation of direct and indirect quotations, and presentation formats of similar material.

The class then works together on the development of the first body paragraph. I read the relevant material in the original essay to the students as they follow in their readers, a procedure which allows them to experience both vocal and visual input. The students and I close our readers and together develop a list of points we remember from the reading. Next we return to the original essay to assure that we have not omitted important points or misrepresented the author's ideas.

We then discuss possible ways of ordering the material, and I remind students of the necessity of referring to the source in every sentence and the need for varying the vocabulary and sentence structure of the citations. The students write their paragraphs; and after several students share their drafts and receive suggestions from class members, the group repeats the process for the other body paragraphs. The students type their essays, including the instructor-written sections, and the class discusses the mechanics and punctuation of structures common in the paraphrase essay, such as direct and indirect quotations and in-text citations. Students show an uncommon interest in this information because they recognize its relevance in their papers.

Students consider this an easy assignment. They do not notice the complexity of many aspects of the project as they work together with the security of having the instructor oversee each step.

Skills Developed by the Unit

The most obvious skills which the unit develops are reading comprehension and critical thinking. Students cannot articulate ideas, in their own words, which they do not understand. They must read the material thoughtfully and repeatedly, if necessary, until they comprehend it; and they must use their analytical and reading skills to see the relationship of ideas. They must pare down complex ideas into basic principles in order to express the meaning clearly and directly.

The paraphrase essay, a factual report of another's ideas, requires students to write in a formal style. They readily sense a purpose and an audience different from those of the personal essay. In the instructor-written section of the essay, provide the model for the academic tone, and the students adapt easily to the required changes. The pre-written essay skeleton demonstrates the use of in-text citations. Since students must include a source reference in every sentence, they get practice in incorporating citations into the text of their papers and moving in and out of them smoothly.

The paper also demands that students vary their vocabulary and sentence structure. As they cite the same source repeatedly, they understand the necessity of finding new ways to present the information. The assignment forces them to put their references in different positions in the sentence and to express their citations in varied words in order to avoid monotony.

Another value of the paraphrase essay—particularly

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in the English classroom—is that students can concentrate on correctness. Since they are dealing with predetermined content, they do not have to generate ideas. Nor do they have to determine a shape or outline for the material. Instead they can focus on clarity and precision in the way they express the ideas. As an instructor, I find myself having opportunities to teach some of the complex grammar lessons—such as those on the correct placement of modifiers, clear pronoun reference, and avoidance of "dangling" verbals—within the meaningful context of students' own writing.

Finally, the paraphrase paper teaches the important lesson of academic integrity. Though most students know that plagiarism is dishonest, some do not recognize the more subtle ways they slip into the practice nor do they understand how easily they can avoid it. After having written a paraphrase, they know how to present another's ideas without pirating them, and they appreciate the credibility and authoritative tone that the in-text citations give their writing. The assignment provides them an alternative to the practice of plagiarism and a motivation to avoid it.

Structuring the Unit

The paraphrase assignment can take several forms. Students can restate sections of texts, rephrase the instructor's explanation of principles or processes, or rewrite ideas found in an article or section of a book in the resource center.

The easiest format for the unity involves the students' restating parts of the textbook for a course. If a section of a chapter is basic to an understanding of other material or presents concepts or principles that are particularly difficult for students to grasp, the class can read the material together, and then the instructor can give an explanation which visualizes the information or an analogy that clarifies it. The class as a group can take notes on the passage, and students can use these notes to compose their paraphrases.

Another variation of the assignment is for students to paraphrase an explanation given by the teacher. In order to allow students to hear the oral presentation as many times as necessary, the instructor should make a video or audio tape and have it available to the students in the campus resource center. The instructor may wish to play the tape to the class and discuss the content before assigning the paraphrase paper for students to complete out of class.

A third application is for students to locate material on a particular subject in the resource center, paraphrase the views of the author, and turn in a copy of the source with the paraphrase. This format inserts a research component into the unit and—if sharing occurs through oral reports, e-mail, or some other format—exposes students to a variety of views.

Use of the Unit Across Disciplines

A review of the lessons a paraphrase paper teaches reveals its value throughout the curriculum. All disciplines are involved in teaching students to read accurately, think clearly, and express concepts precisely and effectively. Underlying all of education is the belief that learners must grasp basic principles in order to move into creative uses of material and that true scholars understand and acknowledge the work of others who make their own work possible.

Learning occurs through writing. The paraphrase paper allows teachers in all areas to provide the opportunity for students to increase their knowledge of material; develop their reading, thinking, and writing skills; and acquire an understanding of scholarship and its form of writing. It is a multipurpose assignment.

Charlotte Pfeiffer, *Professor, English*

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Wanting the Unwanted

A small, rural college located in a sparsely populated area has few questions or worries about what it is supposed to be or do. Rural colleges understand one thing—they are "it"—meaning there is no other organization available to address the cultural, training, and educational needs of the area. For example, individuals spending a year in the county jail need training; patients at the regional mental health center need training in basic life skills; the regional alcohol and drug rehabilitation center seeks training as part of its therapy program; an illiterate person is required to get off welfare; youth who cannot function in the typical high school setting are heading for the streets; a pregnant teenager is trudging toward welfare and poverty; and other "unwanteds" who are a part of the identity foundation of small, rural college work must be served.

At Cossatot Technical College, we accept the fact that we are "it." We recognize we are in the best position in a multi-county region in rural Arkansas to be the implementers of programs for the "unwanted," as well as for the wanted. We do this by collaboration, cooperation, and maintaining a "can do" attitude.

Here is how we addressed a need in rural Arkansas. After the Arkansas legislature mandated all schools to create an "alternative" learning environment for K-12 students who did not function well academically in the typical classroom, the elementary schools in our two counties hired a special teacher to provide a structured, different environment.

The problem for high schools was more complex. A few students in each district were on their way to becoming drop-outs or had ceased to attend school. Some were no longer at an appropriate age for their grade level—e.g., a 16-year-old in the eighth grade. A few had severe social-adjustment problems; some already had established themselves in the criminal justice system as juvenile delinquents. Establishing a special learning environment at the local high schools, already hard-pressed to provide small class programs on limited budgets, was not going to be cost-effective.

The area public school superintendents and Cossatot Technical College representatives met to discuss possibilities and design a plan of action. A countywide consortium was developed with the president of Cossatot Technical College and the superintendent of each school district in the county. This group formed the Board of Control for Alternative Education, funded by participating school districts. Each Board of Control researched models of alternative education and then met as a group to build a composite model.

• The model accepts students on a volunteer basis only. That is, students who wish to enter the alternative learning environment have to agree to a set of absolute rules, have parental permission, be interviewed and approved by the school counselor and principal, and then be accepted by the alternative school. The alternative school makes the final decision (mandating students to attend has not been successful).

• The model disregards grade levels. The curriculum provides prescribed learning models for students based upon basic skills the student would have acquired in high school and in general educational development programs. Programs offered by PACE, TRO, SKILLS BANK; general development curricula; and instructor-developed modules are incorporated as needed.

• Students entering the program are tested to determine the levels of their current academic skills and their capabilities for completing the program.

• Group sessions with a counselor are held daily. Topics include drug and alcohol abuse, getting along in a group, family violence, destructive behavior, and work ethics.

• Established procedures are based upon these concepts:

(a) we are responsible for our own behavior;

(b) all actions have a consequence;

(c) being treated fairly does not mean being treated equally. Rewards or the removal of privileges fit the individual, not the group; and

(d) the coordinator of the school has absolute authority to decide who enters and who remains. Public school appeals processes and mandates do not apply; college policies do.

• Students who apply themselves are given opportunities to mix school and work experience with the possibility of working for pay.

• Some students are allowed to enroll in selected skill courses at the college—such as keyboarding and

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collision repair—or the course on volunteerism.

The decision to locate the school on the college campus was met initially with mild resistance by the college staff. However, in practice, the alternative school student's behavior has been no better or worse than the behavior of a "regular" college student. Students rise to the expectations, for the most part.

The alternative schools opened during the 1995-96 academic year. To date, approximately 33% of the students have dropped out of school altogether, completing neither the public school program nor the alternative school program. Some students have been lost to the court system, and some families have moved away. But there is significant success to report. Most of the students who complete the program go on to find work or enter the college—50% of the students graduating from the alternative schools have enrolled. They fare as well as the recent high school graduates or teens who have completed the GED certificate.

After the alternative schools were in session for one year, a network of social agencies, judges, probation officers, and employers emerged to lend support. Several friendly agencies now provide services or help mentor students. These volunteers visit the classes, help individual students with various problems, and provide support in other ways. Students have worked for the center for the challenged, for local parks, and for the college.

The true innovation of this program is the way in which a small, rural college has acted as the leadership catalyst for community groups working together to solve a common problem. A college needs strong community support to survive, and communities need the college's structure and expertise to solve community problems.

Can rural colleges be all things to all people? The answer is a resounding no! They can and must draw their identity, mission, and focus from the communities they serve. Rural colleges that focus on their communities can open their campuses and use their expertise and their knowledge to solve real human, education, and training problems. Wanting the unwanted is just one small step in the right direction.

Frank G. Adams, *President*

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A New Twist on Articulation

As part of a statewide initiative towards Tech Prep in Indiana, Ivy Tech State College has developed a system of articulation known as Dual Credit. The dual credit process brings together faculty from Ivy Tech and secondary schools in the area to identify common objectives and materials, and to recommend courses that will qualify.

Dual credit is established in all high schools/vocational cooperatives in the college's service area and reaches over 500 high school juniors and seniors each year. High schools use their dual credit status to help market technology education and other related courses. Ivy Tech enjoys the advantages of closer contact with secondary schools, faculty, and teachers; greater awareness of what their students are exposed to before arriving in their class; and increased opportunities to recruit students who are prepared to enroll in second- and third-semester courses in their first semester of college.

Other benefits of dual credit include: the more traditional articulation processes (test-outs, high school teacher recommendations, etc.) are removed for students; students do not need to prove credit or follow a bureaucratic trail for recognition; and the college has pertinent information in its records system when students arrive on campus.

The dual credit system has been expanded to include courses in high schools that have been developed along the guidelines of Ivy Tech courses. These courses are taught either by Ivy Tech faculty or with their assistance.

R. Allen Shotwell, *Instructional Chair for Articulation, Accreditation and Learning Support*

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Guerilla Recruiting

One-person departments are becoming more common in community colleges. While my official title is instructor (and I am the only full-time instructor in the program), I must also see to the administrative duties of the department without compensation, class-load reduction, or clerical help. Because recruiting is one of those duties, I have had to come up with a guerilla recruiting plan—a plan that markets my program to the maximum while using a minimum of time, money, and other resources. Some strategies for implementing a successful recruiting plan are described here.

Mine the wealth of students already on campus districtwide.

Potential students usually talk to counselors first. Counselors have to contend with many programs and cannot always keep up with trends in different occupations. Educate the counselors on as many of your campuses as possible.

Provide current information about your program to student contacts.

Call a half-hour meeting with the counselors. Give them a well-organized, easy-to-read notebook about your program. Include program goals, employment statistics, articles, answers to frequently asked questions, and any other information that might be useful. The explanations should be as visual as possible—add charts, graphs, and photos.

Update the program brochure.

Give it a new look and distribute it districtwide. Ask to leave it on bulletin boards on all campuses. Preplan the boards—e.g., use similarly colored paper on all boards and preprinted computer-generated posters with graphics and program information. Cardboard pockets can be filled with brochures and left on the boards.

Design flyers targeting specific on-campus markets.

For example, I designed flyers targeted at recruiting nursing and Spanish students for the legal assistant program. There is a demand for nurses in personal injury firms, and nurses and bilingual legal assistants command great salaries. Distribute the flyers on all campuses.

Visit area high schools.

Make contact with area high school counselors, career counselors, and teachers whose students might be interested in the program. Visit if you can and leave the brochure and notebook describing the program. If you do not have time to visit everyone, mail brochures with a letter of introduction. Follow up with a phone call. Make contact with area high school students and develop a current mailing list. Attend high school "college nights." Volunteer to speak to classes. Arrange a field trip for high school students to come to campus. Invite them to attend classes, and make sure that these classes are especially interesting.

Go out into the community.

Seek permission to leave brochures in apartment buildings near the campus, local libraries, churches, doctors offices, clinics, washaterias, employment commission offices, and local G.E.D. classes. Plan to make at least two drop-offs a week.

Meet and greet. Ask to speak about your program and career opportunities at luncheon and breakfast meetings for the local chamber of commerce and for service organizations and businesses. Give mini-lectures in your field of expertise; give useful information, and plug your program at the conclusion—e.g., attorneys teaching legal assistance programs can explain why everyone needs a will; computer technology instructors can describe new software applications for home or office.

Use the news. Put ads in community newspapers; the rates are cheaper, and you can target your district's population. Submit newsworthy articles, with pictures, that work to plug your program—e.g., stories about student success, a recent donation of technology from industry, or a human interest experience.

Maximize mailouts.

Send mailouts announcing program and course schedules to appropriately related professional organizations. Tailor the mailout to the audience.

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Check existing program records for students who have never finished the program or have fallen between the academic cracks. Send letters inviting them back, and include your next course offerings and registration information with the letter.

Go global.

Create a web page for your program. Put your Internet address on your business card. Develop an e-mail mailout list, and e-mail information about upcoming registration periods.

Maximize minimal resources.

Advertise your classes on the college marquee when demand for advertising space is low. Be sure to include your office phone number and e-mail address.

Offer classes on weekends and during semester breaks so that working adults and students home from other colleges can enroll in your program. Consider offering continuing education classes. After teaching a short, two-Saturday continuing education class in legal research, I discovered that three of my ten students signed up for regular semester classes.

Offer career seminars. Every semester I hold a seminar about legal assistant careers. I involve speakers from different backgrounds and on various experience levels. I invite graduates of the program who are working in the field, students currently in internships, and experienced legal assistants to talk informally about their careers and to answer questions. And, of course, I extend invitations to high school students, students on all our campuses, and anyone else who may by thinking about pursuing a legal career.

Be Prepared.

Always carry cards and brochures. You never know when you might get an opportunity to sell your program!

DeShaunta Stewart, *Instructor, Legal Assistant Department*

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Multi-Modality Communication

Just before the fall term began, eight hearing-impaired (HI) students—four couples who lived together—walked into my office. These eight students, whose primary mode of communication was American Sign Language (ASL), surprised me by announcing that they planned to attend the upcoming semester. Ours is a rural community college in an isolated county with few educationally diverse resources available. I had *one* interpreter! Immediately, Human Resources ran an advertisement for interpreters that yielded several who were available on a part-time basis, though all were at lower skill levels than our current interpreter. In order to evaluate their potential, my HI students formed an impromptu interview panel and dutifully met with all applicants. I felt that they, as consumers, were the "experts" in the selection process. Two interpreters were hired at the lower interpreter classifications.

Unfortunately, in our area there is no one who is qualified to assess an interpreter's competency or to determine his/her level in the classification system used by our college. To maximize services for the students, I utilized three strategies. My first concern was to ensure that interpreter availability and class times matched for maximum interpreter assistance. Initially, all eight students were pursuing different majors, which seemed to promise little overlap of classes from student to student. However, they all had general education requirements in common; so with the cooperation of admissions and records, previously closed classes were made available, allowing several of these HI students to take a class (and use one interpreter) at the same time and location.

Second, several of the HI students offered to teach these lower skill-level interpreters in the two weeks we had remaining before the term began. This was an informal arrangement—the students felt they benefitted by having skilled interpreters, and the interpreters gained knowledge that would make them more employable. They also coined signs for frequently used terms to cut down on finger-spelling time.

Finally, our office was able to work with the college's court reporting program to provide real-time captioning and a complete written transcript in classes where no interpreter was available. The HI students could ask questions and make comments by typing these onto the laptop computer for oral translation via the court reporter. The court reporting students received credit for lab hours in lieu of wages. In order to make this strategy a success, The Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) program purchased three laptop computers. The court reporters loaded software which converts court reporting machine symbols into standard English. They built dictionaries with relevant terms from required textbooks for each class. We were in business!

The system was not without flaws. These HI students, who had traditionally used ASL as their primary mode of communication, had to translate the real-time captioning. This method of delivery worked best with lecture-type classes. The comprehensive transcription "notes," however, were well-received. Even the instructors asked for copies. Classes where we could provide a court reporter for transcription and an interpreter were the best of both worlds.

We have found that real-time captioning is most popular and beneficial with students who have developed lipreading skills and oral skills—thus, standard English syntax—as their primary means of communication. Also, students who have had exposure to captioned movies and television are very comfortable with real-time captioning in the educational setting.

Mary C. Thompson, *Disabled Students Specialist*

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Pre-tests and Goal-Setting: Improving Student Achievement

A pre-test is a good exercise for helping students prepare for an actual exam. I use a multiple-choice pre-test with the same number of items, content, and difficulty index as the actual test. After the students complete the pre-test, I provide the correct answers, discuss the items, have students total the number of questions they answered correctly, and translate the scores into letter grades.

Then, I draw two overlapping circles on the chalkboard, one labelled "now is" and the other "should be." I ask students to put the grade *they want to earn* on the actual test in the "should be" circle and the grade *they made* on their pre-test in the other. I call this exercise "academic goal setting."

The pre-test and the goal-setting exercise sharpen student awareness of the multiple factors that affect test performance. Taking the actual test approximately two days after the pre-test allows students some time to adjust their study habits, goals, and priorities. To help them begin work on making these adjustments, I discuss with them some changes they might want to consider.

To assess the value of these exercises, I surveyed three of my classes at the end of one semester. As expected, some students reported that they were not influenced by their performance on the pre-test, but the majority reported that the pre-test and goal-setting exercises were helpful in improving actual test performance. I learned that, for many students, the pre-test helped identify their weak areas. One student reported: "It made me work harder; I wanted to beat my pre-test score" One student reported that it put things in perspective—"I realized what I was trying to achieve by the time I had to take the actual test." Furthermore, practice on the pre-test reduced students' anxiety about taking the actual test! Regrettably, the survey also revealed that some students missed the point and tried to memorize the correct answers!

Overall, the pre-test increased student efforts at preparing for the actual exam, raised confidence in their abilities to perform at the level of their expectations, and provided them opportunities to work on their test-taking skills.

William R. Kuhl, *Assistant Professor*

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Assignment: E-mail

Information about getting an e-mail address, locating computers, and using them can be shared on the first class day. A handout on "netiquette" (e-mail etiquette) will help students use the system properly. Then, students can e-mail information typically requested on the more traditional "student info" card directly to the instructor. In addition to specific contact information, students can provide personal information that might help the instructor identify any special assistance that individual students might need.

Some students who are least responsive in class often send the best e-mail letters. And many students will continue the dialogue, especially if the instructor replies. Student distribution lists make it easy to e-mail homework assignments and test scores.

Other uses of e-mail services that have proven successful and given students more time on-task include:

- taking quizzes
- learning the "forward" command using "round robin" exercises
- writing a friend at another school
- finding information about another college (transfer)
- finding department information on the homepage
- practicing writing a memo (for a technical writing class)
- subscribing to foreign news services or papers (for foreign language classes)
- subscribing to current newspapers (for a political science class).

Some students may be apprehensive about using e-mail, but working in small groups during the initial assignment makes all students more comfortable with the new technology.

Sheryl Griffith, *Professor, Mathematics*

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A Leadership Institute for Criminal Justice Professionals

Connecticut criminal justice educators and field practitioners knew that there was a wealth of information available to help mentor and coach future criminal justice professionals, but were concerned that there was no formalized delivery system to convey it. Coupled with their concerns about maintaining a strong emphasis on the ethics, values, and principles that professional leaders support and advocate, advisory board members and faculty began researching existing programs. After visiting similar programs in Florida, California, and England, a formalized course of study was developed and implemented at Tunxis Community-Technical College.

The Command Institute: Supervisory Leadership Program (SLP) was designed on the cutting edge of the establishment of future training and educational standards. This fifteen-credit course of study requires that participants meet program admission criteria and keep up a rigorous schedule that includes their reading over 2000 pages of challenging and stimulating books, texts, and articles. The SLP recognizes the past professional and personal accomplishments of program participants and provides additional opportunities for advancement. Approximately one-third of the program participants hold either two-, four-, or graduate-level degrees. Many have credits from other colleges, military experience, or professional development seminars. This certificate program adds to a professional portfolio and/or helps advise program participants on how to complete the requirements for an associate in science degree, or higher, through a formalized mentoring program.

Goals of the SLP include:

• **Preparing participants for promotional advancement within their own agencies.** Promotions within the criminal justice profession are becoming more and more competitive, and people who seek advancements will benefit from formalized, advanced training/education.

• **Facilitating development of networks with members of other criminal justice agencies and quality circles of expertise.** Often agencies "reinvent the wheel" rather than sharing ideas and information.

• **Promoting an understanding of personal/organizational values and their relationship to effective leadership.** Values, principles, and integrity carry over from one's personal to professional self. Knowing about and understanding how to apply these concepts help professionals "walk the talk."

• **Developing relationship skills which enable supervisors to be supportive of their subordinates, peers, and superiors, while focusing on "time on task."**

• **Analyzing situations from a variety of perspectives, including options and outcomes about a course of action.** The SLP is designed to equip criminal justice professionals with means and methods to problem solve and recognize the power of a "team-approach" in reaching conclusions.

• **Understanding and applying forecasting trends.**

Classes emphasize participation and preparation. Assignments lead to open discussions on contemporary and timely issues. A Guided Discovery Learning (GDL) methodology teaches participants to view leadership as an incremental process. Promoting leadership through a "heroic model" of study is not a program focus. Rather, SLP emphasizes transformational leadership, team-building, skill development, and enlightenment.

Through a series of eight modules and two orientation sessions scheduled to meet once a month for three or four days, participants have an opportunity to complete a self-appraisal of their learning styles, discuss prior educational experiences and current learning patterns, and design a personal academic career development plan, including resumé.

Members of the SLP Advisory Board represent municipal police departments, private security departments, the Department of Corrections, and judicial agencies. The college director of admissions is involved in all aspects of the admissions, marketing, and recruiting processes; and serves as an ad hoc member of the Advisory Board.

Graduates of the SLP are trained to:

- exercise greater leadership in their personal and professional lives
- increase influence over other individuals and groups
- analyze pressing issues from varied perspectives

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- effectively integrate leadership qualities with managerial skills
- experience greater confidence in one's own self-worth
- provide greater support for peers and subordinates
- recognize and support the agency's goals, vision and mission
- integrate values and ethics into professional responsibilities
- design and manage a personal and professional development plan.

The program has 73 graduates to date; they represent the Department of Corrections and municipal and local police departments. Eight-five percent of the graduates have received at least one promotion since program completion. The Connecticut Department of Corrections has recognized the accomplishment, depth, and breadth of this program by requiring it for supervisory-level promotions.

And, students find that the program is a unique experience. One participant observed: "This is the first time I enjoyed school and the first time that what I learned made sense in the real world." And, with an increased emphasis on rights and responsibilities, job satisfaction's relationship to performance, and mentoring and coaching, state agencies and local municipalities are investing more heavily in the training of potential professionals.

Donna Brandeis LaGanga, *Doctoral Student*

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Using Role-Playing to Teach Thinking

My interest in teaching critical thinking was piqued when I was the junior member of a three-person team teaching an interdisciplinary critical-thinking course entitled "Problem Solving." By its conclusion, I was excited about teaching thinking in my composition courses. I decided to begin with Composition I and focused on critical thinking as found in the rhetorical modes: comparison-contrast, analysis, argument and so on. I described critical thinking in lavish, exciting terms; and I helped students individually, in small groups, and in classes perform a variety of thinking tasks.

The students and I quickly discovered that all this new thinking was hard work. I polled them informally almost every week and discovered that though they were completing the same number of homework hours as previous students in the course, they also perceived the work was much harder, that my course was their most difficult, and that the workload bordered on being unfair. Though they expressed great respect for critical thinking as the course progressed, they could not understand how the class could help them in other courses or in future professions. These evaluations continued in spite of my frequent explanations and examples in lecture and in writing of how the thinking skills could be used academically and professionally. The students and I ended the quarter exhausted, as if together we had survived a battle. What, I wondered, had gone wrong?

Practical, Imaginative Group Roles

My usual method of teaching composition had proved successful both for and with students through the years, so gradually I began to look for comparisons between what and how I normally taught and what and how the "Problem Solving" team had taught.

I found that students were engaged in practical writing or thinking situations. When I taught composition students to argue or to read literature critically, I gave them practice exercises such as the writing of business proposals or movie reviews. Similarly, the problem-solving course emphasized practical concerns—e.g., learning to solve someone's emotional problems (in a case study) by using a four-, five-, or six-step method. Students in both courses enjoyed the exercises and performed well on tests.

And, students in both courses tended to respond best when the practical situations were imaginative. When my composition students practiced writing a business proposal, they would work better and learn more if they imagined their own companies—or imaginatively explored their own real-work situations—rather than working with one I imposed. In "Problem Solving," students in groups had a contest to create the best cantilever hanging from the classroom wall using nothing more than newspaper and tape (a popular problem-solving exercise in engineering departments) or using the steps of a problem-solving paradigm to examine their own individual personal or professional situations.

And, both courses often used group work. I had used groups for years; however, "Problem Solving," on occasion, had taken my usual method one step further. In composition, each student in a group was assigned a task: e.g., one as coordinator of the group, another as writer, another as reader to the class. "Problem Solving" occasionally experimented with more: sometimes students performed specific roles related to the imaginary activity. For example, in an exercise designed to teach students how cultures clash, one student in each group was required to be completely silent, one could only listen and respond with hand signals, and one could only talk without listening.

Dramatic Thinking

I utilized these three successful elements—practical exercises, imaginative input from students, and group role-playing—slowly, but increasingly, in my composition courses. In a news writing exercise, I asked students to interview each other like journalists and report on each other's lives, using the 5 W's of journalism. For a business report, I asked each small group of students to make up a business name and product, then pretend they are managers or executives in their company and create a proposal, a TV ad, or a progress report on the development of the product. In a World Religions course, I asked each group to make up their own religion, sometimes imagining that they as a group were the founders of a religion that would gain worldwide

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acceptance, and sometimes imagining roles for each of themselves such as mystic, minister, business leader, or town conservative.

My most sophisticated role-playing exercise occurred in a research-writing course in which I was teaching students how to use the thinking skills of description, simple analysis, argument, and evaluation. The exercise was called "Having a Baby": a teenager either is pregnant by, or has made pregnant, someone from an impoverished part of town. The students in each group first chose individual roles as members of the teenager's family and created and analyzed the problem; then they received the analysis of another group, chose roles as friends of this other "family," and presented arguments concerning the other family's problems; third, they became a panel of mental health professionals of their choice and evaluated yet another group's family problems; finally, they evaluated their own work as a group. This exercise can take two to four class hours. Students later wrote an argumentative and evaluative research paper, and they reported that the paper was much easier to write because of this introductory exercise.

I now use role-playing exercises to introduce new papers and new concepts almost every week. I have not had to change the content I teach, just some of the methods. In addition, my courses now have a critical-thinking orientation that I can describe and that students can more easily transfer. By the end of a course, students are able to list a number of thinking tools they have acquired. Student evaluations of my courses and their critical thinking contents have risen to higher levels, even as these same evaluations describe my courses as among the most difficult—but rewarding—courses they have taken in college.

Guidelines for Developing Role-Playing

- Isolate the thinking pattern or skill you want to teach. What kind of thinking do students need to perform in order to learn successfully what you want of them? For example, if you are requiring a paper in history or psychology that involves analysis, separate the kind of analysis you expect into a teachable exercise.
- If the thinking skill appears complex to students, break it down further into steps, parts, or separate functions. For example, students who may not grasp the complexities of a lawsuit may need it broken down into the viewpoints and separate thinking and feeling processes of lawyers and their clients.
- Decide if the skill can be practiced best by individuals working alone or by small groups, in class or out. Role-playing in groups often works best although students working at home may be more appropriate on occasion. I often assign major papers that require individual students to develop or create business or social situations to which they can apply thinking patterns.
- Imagine enjoyable, challenging, dramatic roles for students to try. Set clear parameters. Create dynamic, difficult-to-solve problems to which students can react strongly. In the exercise described earlier, for example, the cantilever had to be self-supporting, could not touch the ground, could not contain any "illegal" substances such as student pens or rulers, could not depend on the ceiling for suspension, and had to stand on its own for at least one full minute at measurement time. Most teachers develop their parameters gradually as their students try out their exercises.
- Collect brief, handwritten, or oral evaluations within the same day or week. Role-playing can create dramatic changes in how students perceive the contents of a course section. And, what works well for some does not for others.

Discovering Student Perceptions

If we can discover students' perceptions of their own potential roles and abilities, we can use their perceptions to develop efficient, enjoyable exercises that teach basic thinking. We will discover, of course, that some student perceptions are shallow and intemperate; however, there also are many that are both ennobling and practical. It is from these noble and practical hopes that we can fashion roles and exercises that match both the needs and the dreams of our students.

Richard Jewell, *Education Specialist*

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Cooperative Education: An Innovative Approach

Cooperative Education (Co-op) may have begun in the engineering disciplines, but it is now widespread among other disciplines in many colleges. Co-op's original purpose was that students would gain work experience. There was little or no instruction in the relationships between theory and practice.

The current cooperative education program at Montgomery College provides students with multiple opportunities to integrate academic theory with applied learning in the workplace, develop verbal and written communication skills, develop project management skills, manage multiple priorities, and practice analysis, problem solving, and decision making.

Admission Requirements

Students must have a 2.5 GPA and at least 30 credits to be considered for enrollment in the program. They must be in a new position or have assumed new responsibilities within the current year. They must submit a proposal describing their old and new job responsibilities, their goals, and what they propose to accomplish during the 15-week semester.

Processes and Classes

Students must attend four classes, prepare a learning contract, write answers to three selected questions, and make two oral presentations.

The two oral (five-minute) presentations allow students to obtain experience in giving short, but complete, executive summaries of their work. Students are advised to be bright, be brief, and be gone!

The first presentation is an organizational profile that requires students to review the organization's operations and culture. The second, the progress report, allows students to describe their learning contract objectives, their progress toward accomplishing the objectives, the benefits to self and the organization, or the difficulties in accomplishing their objectives.

Three papers are submitted—one a month. The first paper describes the relationship of the student's work to his or her supervisor's objectives and the organization's goals; the second relates a theory or concept learned in a course to the actual practice at work; and the third explains learning in organizational behavior, communication skills and processes, technical issues and skills, and personal and career development.

A learning contract integrates academic learning with the actual workplace activities. It describes an educational goal and objectives for accomplishing the goal, demonstrates how each objective is to be completed, and includes an evaluation method. The contract is signed by the student, his or her supervisor, and the faculty coordinator. A performance evaluation is completed by the student's supervisor.

Conclusion

Classes consist of three rotating groups: one group completing the course, another halfway through, and another beginning orientation and observation. Students report that the rolling enrollment enables them to learn from others and develop networks.

Students like the co-op format because it provides opportunities for public speaking, the contract format because it provides structure to completing projects, and the organizational profile because it helps them better understand their organizations. Asking questions at the conclusion of each presentation provides students with opportunities to learn about different organizational cultures as well as operations, professions, structures, policies, and procedures.

Joseph R. Manno, *Instructor, Cooperative Education*

For further information contact the author at Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD 20850.

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An Alternative to Traditional Testing

Traditional tests and measurements have a blind spot we simply cannot ignore. Traditional testing keys in on the amount of knowledge a person has obtained in a particular discipline for a specified period of time. I challenge the nature and value of traditional examinations and offer an alternative method that might bring personal accountability back into the hands of the learner.

Reaction and reflection is a general instructional device I use in many of the introductory programs I teach—e.g., Art Foundations One, Basic Photography, as well as several interdisciplinary courses. For each project students submit during the semester, they are asked to make the following observations:

1. Describe what you understood the assignment to be.
2. Describe what was accomplished in your project.
3. Give a brief evaluation of the strengths you feel your project possesses. What outstanding features of the project does it reflect?
4. What might you have done better, or what were you unable to do?

Each assignment is graded using a plus/check/minus system.

- A plus reflects excellent work with both craft and risk, as well as understanding.
- A check/plus reflects good work, but the student needs to extend his or her thinking.
- A check indicates the student has completed the assignment and seems to understand what he or she was asked to do. However, the lack of both craft and risk is evident.
- A check/minus reflects the student's attempt to do the assignment without understanding exactly what the project entailed.
- A zero indicates that the student made no attempt to tackle the project.

Admittedly, turning over such responsibility and accountability for learning to students may not work in every discipline. However, the concept—asking students to search their personal feelings and evaluate their individual investments/outcomes—is at the heart of what education is all about.

Al Beck, *Associate Faculty*

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Using a Cost-Benefit Proposal to Help Improve Teaching

Are you teaching as well as you know how to teach? If you answer "no" for any of the following reasons, then you may be about to experience one of those rare times when reading your mail pays off—big time! The reasons are:

- inadequate supplies
- inadequate equipment
- inadequate facilities
- inadequate curriculum
- inadequate staff
- troublesome policies and procedures

You're still reading—good.

Now, how do you get them to give your problem the attention it deserves? How do you get them to give you the resources you need—or change the policy / procedure that is preventing you from doing what you know you need to do? But, you say, "There is never enough money—and changing the way we do things around here makes losing 50 pounds look easy!"

The solution is simple—just communicate your request in such a way that they cannot say no. You need to incorporate your ideas into a one-page cost-benefit proposal that clearly and succinctly states what you are proposing, why you are asking for it, its costs, and the potential benefits that will occur when (not if) it is approved.

Still interested? Good! Carefully read the benefit proposal on the next page. When you have finished, come back and continue reading.

What you read is an edited version of a proposal that was actually submitted by one of the authors. It earned him, his colleagues, and their students state-of-the-art hardware, software, equipment, furniture, training, and remodeling (almost $200,000 worth). Other faculty have enjoyed similar success with proposals ranging from $100,000 to over one million dollars. To learn how to accomplish this for yourself, read the guidelines for preparing your own one-page cost-benefit proposal.

General Guidelines

Your task is to summarize the essence of your proposal in one page. Your summary should take the reader less than one minute to read and should:

- state your proposal succinctly
- provide a clear statement of the importance of your proposal to the students, the department, the college, the community, etc.
- reference any supporting background material
- contain a complete listing of proposal costs
- summarize the expected benefits to be received when the proposal is funded
- include the person to be contacted for additional information.

Specific Guidelines

Statement of the proposal. Your proposal must contain a clear, succinct statement of your intended goal. An example might read:

To provide students with knowledge and skills in computer-based-troubleshooting techniques, we propose to purchase a Sun 450 Diagnostic Machine for the automotive lab.

Rationale. Explain why achieving the goal is important. For example:

The electronics department needs to provide instruction about vector drive electric motor theory, applications, and repair to industrial electronics students. Both employer and graduate surveys have shown that local industries are replacing electric motors with vector drive motor systems. Since we have no vector drive systems, our graduates lack the understanding of vector drive systems needed to compete for industrial electrician positions in the workforce.

Expected benefits. State the benefits that will accrue to your students, your colleagues, and your program when the proposal is funded. Known benefits such as "broader employability skills" are adequate, but measurable benefits such as "students will attain AWS D1.1 plate certification positions," are better.

Costs. Be totally accurate about the costs for your proposal. If you ask for a new position, be sure to include hidden costs like employer-paid benefits and employer-paid social security taxes.

Net-cost (optional). Take the total cost of your proposal and subtract any savings or earned income to determine the net cost. Sometimes it helps to divide the net cost by the number of students to arrive at a cost per student.

Contact person. Tell the reviewer how to contact you.

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The Key Ingredient—Rewriting

One of the most important steps in developing a cost-benefit analysis is proofreading and evaluating the proposal. This step often takes 25-50% of the total time spent on the analysis. Are there any typing errors? Is the proposal succinct? Does the proposal develop a clear picture of the problem and the solution? Are any pertinent details left out? Does the proposal stand alone? Is it easy to understand? Would you approve it if you were the one reviewing it? An effective method of evaluating a proposal is to have several critical colleagues play "devil's advocate" and find any loopholes in your arguments.

A Final Note

By developing a cost-benefit analysis to support your proposal, you increase the likelihood of having your proposal funded. The reviewers will have a clear picture of your needs, the costs, and the potential benefits. The end result is that a more informed decision can be made about your request—and you get what you need to improve your teaching!

Jim Hammons, *Professor, Higher Education*

Ken Turner, *Interim Chair, Division of Technology*

For further information, contact Jim Hammons at University of Arkansas, 251 Graduate Education Building, Fayetteville, AR 72701. e-mail: jhammons@comp.uark.edu, or Ken Turner at Westark Community College, P. O. Box 3649, Fort Smith, AR 72913. e-mail: kturner@systema.westark.edu

Cost-Benefit Proposal

Proposal: To insure that Westark Community College continues to provide quality instruction in Computer-Aided Drafting and Design that meets current workplace needs.

Rationale: Computers have replaced the drafting board in over 50% of the area's industries. These industries have a need for "computer drafters" and a need to retrain their current staff of "board drafters."

Cost-Benefit Table

Costs:

Initial Program Costs:	
Computer hardware	$106,000
Computer software	7,000
Ancillary equipment	12,000
Furniture	12,000
Remodeling:	25,000
Total:	$162,000
Bi-annual Recurring Program Costs:	
Computer upgrades	$12,000
Software upgrades	10,000
Faculty development	5,000
Total:	$27,000
Total cost over two years:	$189,000
Less:	
Return on investment (2 years):	
First year BII return	$70,800
Second year BII return	106,200
Compufer reallocation	12,000
Total:	189,000

Net Cost:

Program revenues over two years will equal total expenditures.

After two years, the program should provide an annual return of $90,000.

Contact Person: Ken Turner
Westark Community College
Phone: (501) 788-7700

Benefits:

1) We will have a state-of-the-art Computer-Aided Drafting and Design Lab.
2) Students' work stations will be increased from 12 to 24.
3) Students' credit hour capability will be doubled without adding additional faculty.
4) The Business and Industrial Institute (BII) will be able to conduct update training and generate external revenue.
5) The new classroom configuration will allow the lab to be split into 8, 16, or 24 stations for better utilization of lab space.
6) Westark will become a Premier Auto DESK® Training Center.
7) Westark will perform a significant community service to several local industries.

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Teaching with Compressed Video

Compressed video, where classrooms are directly linked by video and audio connections, is a valuable tool of distance education. Students living miles from a main campus can gain access to instruction using remote sites, while reducing travel time and other costs. But some pedagogical problems need to be addressed.

In the 1997 summer term at Germanna Community College, I collaborated with a professor at another GCC campus to teach the American Civil War via compressed video. He led the classes "live" at one campus with approximately 20 students, while I led learners at another as an observer-participant on the video end. We used the lecture-discussion method in these classes.

Of specific interest in evaluating our success with compressed video was how well the students interacted with the technology, how their learning outcomes were affected by the format, and what significant differences developed in student learning between "live" and video locations.

Student Responses and Evaluation

Student perceptions of the compressed video system were tabulated at the end of the course. The questions we asked included:

- Were you more or less willing to be involved in class participation and discussion in a teleconference video course as compared with a standard classroom course?
- How would you rate your learning and understanding of the professor at the opposite location from you?
- Would you have preferred taking this course without the video system as part of the course?

Of the 21 students who evaluated the course, 12 indicated they would have preferred taking the history course without compressed video, indicating student desire for a more "traditional" classroom environment. When asked whether they were more or less willing to be involved in course discussion with CV, two-thirds of the students indicated they were less likely to participate in course discussions. Over half of the students indicated only fair or poor understanding of the instructor at the other location.

Student comments demonstrated the need for improving the delivery of courses using CV. We had been advised to use the cameras to zoom in on students at distant locations so that all of the students would become more familiar with each other and feel more like actual classmates. But students complained that camera movement and attempts to zoom in on speakers were distracting, that people in the back of a room could not be seen or heard clearly, and that they would be unable to recognize students from the other campus if they met on the street.

Instructor Observations

Audio problems were a constant irritation. Students sitting and talking near a classroom microphone were so loud that it became necessary to consistently adjust the volume level at the other end, taking my concentration away from academic concerns and diverting student attention. An approximate two-second delay between speech at one location and transmission to the other kept groups at both locations from engaging in quick, spontaneous interaction. Students became fearful of interrupting a speaker at the distant location, beginning to speak before they could hear a question addressed to them.

Another concern was loss of attention among students at the location listening to and watching lectures on the television screen. As one professor spoke about causes of the Civil War and the problems with the postwar reconstruction of the south, students at the distant location seemed to lose interest rapidly. The students at the "live" lectures location were more attentive, reinforcing the idea that students at distant sites react more passively to lectures via CV, while the talks appeared more stimulating for students in the "live" classroom setting. These differences raise serious questions concerning the equality of learning between "live" and video locations.

What improvements can be made to increase student learning with CV? Faculty must become more proficient in using the technology; or, audiovisual specialists at the college could operate the systems in class, allowing professors to concentrate on academics rather than technological devices. Increasing student interaction through small group discussion techniques and having students share assignments could help personalize courses at remote sites and create a comfortable ambience, while lessening the fear of technology.

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Compressed video can become an asset as improvements are made in course delivery. As a form of distance education, CV provides increased access to education for learners unable to reach a main campus. Studies indicate that the farther from campus a student lives, the more favorably he or she evaluates televised courses. As compressed video expands educational access, evaluations of the system should improve—if faculty make linked classrooms more learning-centered.

David M. Shaheen, *Adjunct Professor, History*

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Self-Running PowerPoint *Presentations*

Some faculty and staff are unable to attend excellent professional development workshops because of conflicts in their schedules. To address this problem, I have begun to convert all notes from any technology workshops into self-running *PowerPoint* presentations. A *Microsoft Word* document is converted into a *PowerPoint* presentation, and enhancements such as graphics, sound, and animation, which are essential for stressing points and maintaining interest, are added.

Once the presentation is converted and altered for the new medium, navigation buttons are installed to help the users who are unfamiliar with *PowerPoint*. Hyperlinks are added so that the user can jump to other presentations that contain additional information or access the glossary section of the presentation. Since *Microsoft PowerPoint 97* can hyperlink to other programs, buttons can actually launch another program. For instance, in the Introduction to the Internet presentation, a button launches the *Microsoft Explorer* so the user can practice the material.

To make the computerized workshops even easier to use, I built another *PowerPoint* presentation that acts as a front end for all of the other shows. An introductory screen is followed by instructions for using the system, and a main menu has action buttons for seamlessly opening the program of choice. Users only need to know how to click a mouse. Hyperlinks are put into each separate presentation so that the user can always come back to the main menu. Programs can be viewed over and over, letting the user master the skills at his own speed. Handouts from the workshop are available for use during the session and for future reference.

Instructors and trainers alike are finding many uses for these self-running shows. As an English instructor, I used this technique to make reference material for English students. While *PowerPoint* presentations will never replace hands-on classes or workshops, they are wonderful enhancements and solve some of the problems that missed classes and conflicting schedules create.

Shari McMahon, *Professional Development Coordinator*

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Getting Them to Read

It is difficult to deliver a meaningful lecture to a class in which most of the students have not read the assignment, and it is virtually impossible to facilitate relevant discussion. I have sought and tested several solutions to this problem—given periodic pop quizzes, canceled the prepared lecture and "made" students read the assignment during the class period, and offered bonus points to anyone who had at least read the first page or two. To my dismay, these solutions proved unsuccessful—students still were not reading on a regular basis.

Two years ago, I implemented a strategy that has proved quite successful: I began allowing students to plan and administer daily tests on the assigned readings. The only guidelines I provided were that 1) the test questions must be objective, 2) the answers must be found in the work itself, and 3) the test-giver must vouch that he/she has not shared the questions with any of his/her classmates.

This strategy is appealing to students because it puts them in control. For, surely, if the test is prepared by "one of their own," it will not be as difficult as the one prepared by the teacher. Surprisingly, only a few questions have been asked which I considered too easy or otherwise inappropriate. Actually, most of the questions have been similar to those I have asked in previous classes.

This strategy for getting students to read is also appealing because the test-giver receives the maximum number of points for simply developing and administering the test; the content of the questions neither adds to nor detracts from the giver's grade. Therefore, many students are eager to give the test because they are guaranteed an A. "Furthermore," they reason, "why risk doing poorly on a test given by someone else?"

Frequently, several students want to administer the test on the same day, and I give that privilege to the student who asks first. But on some days, to keep interest high, I allow two students to ask their prepared questions. (Never have both students asked all of the same questions.) Furthermore, once a student has given a test, he can only give another if no one else volunteers. On days that no one volunteers—which are few—either we forgo the test, or I create one.

This plan has removed some of the pressure on me to write daily quizzes; and because students often grade the tests in class, the pressure of nightly grading is also reduced. Most important, though, this strategy has become an effective means of getting students to read. And, as a consequence of students reading more regularly, class participation has increased. For as we provide answers to the test questions, discussions of themes, symbols, and character naturally emerge. Perhaps the most spirited and fruitful discussions, however, are those which reflect a difference between the test-giver's understanding of the work and the understanding of her peers.

The greatest appeal of this strategy is the impact it can have on a student's final grade. The average of the combined daily tests accounts for 15% of a student's overall grade and is equal to the weight of the first major exam. If a student simply reads the assigned material, typically he will receive at least an 80 on each daily test; consequently, 15% of his final grade will be a B or better. Most students agree that this is a significant percentage and worthy of the effort. The primary objective of an introductory or survey literature course is to expose students to writing. Such exposure begins when we find effective ways to get them to read.

Sabrina B. Cokley, *Instructor, English*

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Student-Created Course Reviews

Last term, casting around once again for an engaging yet comprehensive way to present an end-of-course review in my composition classes, I found myself frustrated and clueless. I was tired of covering the material via a teacher-led lecture, a method which always had me yawning along with the students.

How else to cover the methods, strategies, and techniques of the course, one more time, in a thoughtful and thorough way? As I made a list of the important information and advice I wished to include, it suddenly dawned on me to follow the same process-oriented and student-centered approach I use in all my writing classes. Initiating student-created, end-of-term reviews has proven most successful in my first-year composition classes and is a method I feel would work well in most classes. The benefits are many and immediate: students return to their notes and textbooks, review the materials, and make purposeful choices as to what is essential and important; they prioritize and sequence the selected information; they work collaboratively with other classmates to achieve the directed goals; and they organize, draft, and design the review materials.

My role is to provide the students with general guidelines of information that must be covered. The rest is left to their imagination and initiative. I frame the assignment with the notion that they are completing handouts for students who are just beginning the class. This indication of audience and purpose works well to provide focus and direction for the assignment.

Students are placed into groups of three or four and asked to begin. One or two class periods are devoted to creating the handouts, often with students dividing the tasks and working outside of class, as well. In addition to creating the handouts, I require the students to make a presentation which, rather than merely restating what the handout says, discusses each group's reasons for the content and stylistic features of its materials. These presentations provide me with the opportunity to emphasize important information or to initiate a discussion of how rhetorical choices affect the style, tone, and content of a document.

The handouts, in addition to working well to re-immerse the students in the course materials in a fun and interesting way, reveal to me what it is that the students have actually learned or feel is important to them as writers. From their responses, I can gauge the effectiveness of my own presentations and materials, and adjust them accordingly. I have taken several good ideas from handouts and used them in subsequent classes, truly cases of a teacher learning from students!

The results of the assignment have been both fun and impressive, ranging from traditional-type handouts to tri-fold, multi-colored brochures; a newsletter with graphics and bylines; and a spiral-bound mini-booklet complete with cover and table of contents. The students seem to enjoy creating the review materials, and I feel confident that they cover the course review thoroughly and only have themselves to blame if they find themselves—or me—yawning!

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Divide-and-Conquer Programming: Using Interdependent Teams

You know the drill—you're not really looking forward to grading those project assignments from your introductory programming classes. Twenty-five or more attempts at a one-page program like the bubble-sort are dull for you, and they are not exactly the sort of exciting applications programming that your students looked forward to at the beginning of the semester either.

Maybe you've considered or employed team approaches, too—they're more challenging and interesting for everyone, but the results still tend to be short, simplistic programs that are a long way from the programming tasks required in the workplace. What can be done to help students who have limited skills and experience produce more challenging and entertaining projects?

I've had a fair amount of success with "interdependent" teams. After covering the basics of programming in the first half of the semester, we devote the last seven weeks of the semester to a whole-class project. I divide the class into teams of three or four students each; then we take on a challenging project which requires each team to develop a portion of a program and integrate it with the work of the other teams. If the scope of the project requires it, I divide the work across teams in different sections of the same class. For example, this semester we built a small "chat-room" application which allows students to send messages to one another in real-time across the campus's local area network, about 300 lines of program code. (My usual average has been about 50.)

Advantages

There are advantages to this approach:

• Tasks are more authentic. The program that students develop looks and acts more like the commercial software with which they are familiar than does the standard individual assignment that I used to make. (My individual assignments never had a graphical user interface, for example.) This authenticity seems to increase intrinsic student interest and motivation.

• More learning results. The collaborative teams foster peer tutoring and other "high-quality" interactions. The need to understand and use the work of other teams gives students more exposure to a wider variety of programming examples, techniques, and styles than they would get with individual projects or independent teams.

• Students are exposed early on to a number of neglected, real-world issues that arise out of programming teams: e.g., the need to document code so that collaborators can better understand it, the utility of individual or module testing, prototyping, problems inherent in integrating the work of multiple authors, and a host of software quality and software engineering I did not cover before in an introductory class.

• Students construct a portfolio of their best programs right from the start. Although this is a collective project, there is no doubt that explaining one's part in developing a 300-line program is more impressive to potential employers than the bubble-sort.

Useful Techniques

Taking on a substantial software project with neophyte programmers is challenging for everyone, especially the instructor. Some techniques that have helped my students and me include:

• "Scaffolding." In the case of programming projects, this means pre-written segments of program code which the team members are required to comprehend, apply, and modify in the course of completing their section of the project. I usually explain this exercise as "reverse engineering"—figuring out the program's author's techniques and intent by working backwards from the (poorly documented) programming code. Regrettably, not only is this a realistic preview of tasks students may find themselves performing on the job, it makes some formerly abstract points about the need for good design and documentation more concrete and visceral. In fact, studying other program codes is just as vital to learning to program well as is reading other people's writing in mastering composition.

• Augmenting the textbook with various on-line and hypermedia tutorials and references. Many textbooks are very good, but it seems that the better they are as tutorials for novice programmers, the worse they are as quick references for teams trying to understand or debug more challenging program elements. With the

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help of several Internet-savvy students, I was able to locate, download, and install an extensive library of public domain tutorial and example program documentation. As students worked through designing or reverse engineering their portion of the project, each team browsed the on-line materials for explanations and examples in addition to those in the text. Some students liked the on-line materials much better than the text. Most made effective use of the program examples, downloading them, and subsequently using them as the basis for editing and creating their own team's contributions.

• Thinking of the class as a software development company. A number of students get caught up in this metaphor, bringing in examples of "competing products" which they have gleaned from browsing the Internet, or creating colorful splash screens or logos for our program. We start each class with a short project-status meeting in which a designated spokesperson for each group has to report on his or her team's progress in terms of accomplishments, problems, and plans. After each group has reported, we formulate a plan of action and goals for that day's class.

• Explaining their work to others. We facilitate explanations by having code reviews at reasonable completion points. At these times, representatives nominated (or coerced) by each team informally demonstrate and explain how their team's contribution to the project actually works.

• Basing the final examination directly on the project. Almost half of the final exam questions are taken from relevant portions of the text or on-line reference materials; the rest are on identifying programming constructs and techniques actually employed in the project. I use program source listings developed by each class and ask the students to indicate which line of code illustrates the particular concept covered—e.g., parameters, conditional statements, loops, and so forth. Recognizing that individual teams will be more familiar with some parts of the program than others, I present several different pieces of the project, chosen so as not to favor the work of any one team. Test-takers are allowed to answer their exam questions using program examples they choose.

Conclusions

This approach does have its downside. I found that spending the class period moving from team to team, debugging, encouraging, answering questions, and being stumped myself, left me more exhausted than did either lecturing or grading those bubble-sorts. However, I think those magic moments at the end, when the program actually works as a whole for the first time, more than make it all worthwhile. If your students have never spontaneously applauded and cheered, slapped one another on the back, or offered to buy sodas for the class when their program comes to life, then you should try this approach.

Jerry Reed, *Professor, Computer Programming and Applications*

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All the World's a Classroom: A Study-Abroad Program

When a group of Southwest Texas Junior College students expressed an interest in foreign travel, but were reluctant to spend the money on what they viewed as a vacation, two faculty members created the Study Abroad Program (SAP). SAP was designed for students to earn college credit by taking courses offered as part of an overseas travel experience. One of SAP's major objectives was to broaden the world view of students who had spent much of their lives in the rural and relatively isolated border region of southwest Texas. A second objective was to use an interdisciplinary curriculum to introduce students to a holistic approach to learning.

SAP instructors prepared a program of study in which the integration of course materials was designed to help students make connections among various fields of study. With surveys of the history and literature of Europe from its beginnings through the Renaissance as their base, students had the freedom to explore the topics that interested them—science, art, religion, architecture, music, agriculture, education, recreation, invention, and anything else that could be included in a study of the past. Finally, the program sought to provide an exciting learning experience that would remain with students throughout their lives.

The instructors merged existing English and history courses and, with the aid of an established student travel organization, chose a 16-day itinerary. (They presented the proposal to the dean, president, and board of trustees, who sanctioned submitting it to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval.)

Provided with a reading list before the courses began, students earned six credit hours by reading, writing, and participating in other activities on the journey. Throughout the trip, students met with instructors for individual and group discussions, relating their experiences to the topics under study. For the course project, each student created a portfolio that included:

- a daily travel journal, with analysis of the day's learning experiences
- photographs or drawings of sites on the tour
- mementos reflecting the history and literature of the sites
- analysis of individual topics of interest the student pursued
- summaries of interviews with local guides and residents
- responses to instructor-generated questions.

The format of the portfolio was deliberately left unstructured to allow students to exercise their creativity in producing the project. Evaluation of the product was based primarily on the depth and breadth of information and analyses included in it, with a secondary focus on its presentation.

Although the students met with their instructors several times before departure, the classes officially began when the group's flight arrived in London. Following an overview tour of the city, the students were sent to explore the area on their own, searching for information about topics of individual interest. Students also attended a Shakespeare in the Park production. From London, the group went to Canterbury, entertaining themselves by telling modern versions of Chaucer's tales. After exploring the cathedral and the town, students traveled to Dover for the Channel crossing, watching the fading White Cliffs as they approached Calais and the drive to Paris. After another overview tour, students experienced the literature and history of European civilization through the art at the Louvre and studied Gothic architecture at the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Then students were once again sent to search the city for information.

With Paris behind them, students rode through the French wine country, absorbing—in some cases quite literally—the agricultural history of the region on their way to Switzerland. Walking across the famous bridge over Lake Lucerne, students born and raised in the desert that spans the Texas-Mexico border saw scenes that were far outside the realm of their experience.

On the road to Florence, students reenacted *Decameron* tales and participated in discussions of Renaissance literature and history. The students discovered the spirit of the Renaissance in Florence and Vatican City, surveying the art, history, and literature of the period before stepping further into the past to classical civilization. Rome and Athens provided the backdrop and content for the earliest periods the

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students studied. Discussions of Roman history and literature at the Colosseum, Catacombs, Circus Maximus, and Palatine brought ancient civilization to life for the students as well as for the faculty and community members who joined the tour.

From Rome, students traveled to Brindisi for the overnight ferry crossing to Piraeus and the drive to Delphi, where they climbed to the theater and athletic field as they queried the Greek historian who guided that segment of the tour. After exploring the ruins at Delphi, they journeyed to Athens to wander among the remains of the Parthenon and conduct further investigations of the ancient city on their own. The courses officially ended in Athens, but many students opted to take a three-day cruise with ports-of-call at Mykonos, Rhodes, Patmos, and Ephesus.

Because many community college students receive financial aid, are employed, and/or have families and other obligations, financing the trip was a major concern. SAP instructors began advertising the program 15 months before the European courses were scheduled. A payment plan allowed students several months to make the initial deposit, and the balance could be paid in installments over the next seven months. The travel company provided fund-raising ideas, and students who were determined to join the foreign study tour found ways to earn money to pay for the trip. SAP became a community-outreach project when local residents, recognizing that student travel is relatively inexpensive, accepted the invitation to join the tour. Travelers from the community added a beneficial dimension to the experiences of the students, who used the knowledge base of group members to enhance their studies.

The entire world is a classroom in which any curriculum can be presented by creative instructors willing to put the effort into planning and executing a foreign studies program. In the SWTJC pilot program, a true spirit of discovery learning allowed students to explore the settings of literature and history they had previewed before the trip. A 100% completion rate indicated that the program was successful, but its success also could be measured by the achievement of its objectives. In comments made in conversations and journals, students revealed that their world view had expanded. Immersed in foreign cultures, students were forced to communicate with residents in mixtures of English, Spanish, gestures, facial expressions, and local languages. They watched television and perused newspapers, finding that the issues facing people in faraway lands are in many ways just like their own. They tried new foods, experimented with mass transport, and attended local festivals. They made connections between history, literature, and other fields as they became increasingly aware of the interconnectedness of subjects they had studied throughout their schooling. Perhaps most important, students were given opportunities to experience learning as an exciting adventure and to explore topics of interest in places many had never thought they would visit. Community college students may not fit the profile of the typical "study abroad" participant, but given the time and assistance to finance the trip, and plenty of encouragement to pursue their dreams, they can and will find ways to involve themselves in overseas programs.

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Instilling a Sense of Community and Citizenship

Three distinct but intertwining issues form the basis of our society, and we accept them without question—rights, privileges, and responsibilities; however, the success we have balancing these three abstractions determines how effective we are as individual citizens and as a collective of citizens. In my "Applied Leadership Theory" class, I have used these issues for structuring group discussions with my students as they examine their service experiences. I ask students to explore how these concepts are played out in the lives of those they are serving, as well as in their own.

Rights are individual in nature, and they are abstractions which rely on unique egocentric interpretations. Rights are also constitutional guarantees dependent on the governance structure of each country. Frequently, in America, rights are attached to different groups via our continuing struggle with selfishness. In short, rights are all about power.

Privilege is individual in nature but is almost always related to the group to which one belongs. Various factors come into play such as wealth, social status, and individual achievement. Birth factors include gender, race, and ethnicity. Privileges rely on the existence of inequality and many times are at odds with rights. And yet, they serve as a primary motivating force for individual action.

Finally, there is responsibility. Responsibilities are both individual and group in nature; the common factor is internal choice. Often, one has a choice: "doing what is right for all" versus "what I have a right to do for me."

The leadership factor determines how well we learn to meet our responsibilities. Leadership helps us translate individual ideas, morals, values, and expectations into group norms—our laws. In the absence of agreed-upon group standards of behavior which provide the basis for one's internal control, individual action becomes divisive and destructive. As individual behaviors create more open conflict between individuals and/or groups, our legislators lean toward passing more laws which are, in simple terms, more external controls. More laws, in turn, lessen the need for internal controls and short-circuit the development of accepting responsibility for others first.

The vitality of our society depends on our finding ways to choreograph this dance of abstractions because the results of our efforts are all too real in the day-to-day actions of our citizens. We have basic rights, and we can earn distinct privileges; yet, we must always take responsibility for assuring that our privileges do not impinge upon the sanctity of another's basic rights. It takes a lifetime to become better at managing this balancing act, and that is citizenship in action.

Should postsecondary education have an explicit role in instilling a sense of community and citizenship? Most assuredly, yes!

How might that role be defined and implemented? One effective means is through the teaching pedagogy of service-learning. In its simplest terms, service-learning is a strategy to improve the student's ability to learn course material through experiential learning in service to the community. It is applicable for almost any course and can be integrated into nearly every aspect of the collegiate experience.

Our experiences at Miami-Dade Community College, where we have had more than 3,000 students participate in service-learning over the past three years, indicate that students gain civic literacy, which we define as the awareness and acceptance of one's responsibility to one's community. When we surveyed our students to find out what motivated them to become involved, we found that only 29% were concerned with social issues affecting society. And yet, upon completion of their service, 75% reported that they had a positive attitude toward community involvement and citizenship.

Service-learning is good teaching, as evidenced by responses from our service-learning students. For example, during the winter term 1996, 16 professors from a broad array of disciplines had 340 students complete service-learning. Although only 44% were involved in community service prior to taking the service-learning course, 92% indicated that now they are more interested in service, and 88% indicated that they will continue volunteering in the future. Ninety-two percent agreed that more service-learning classes should be taught at the college, and nearly 100% (99.4) felt that the service-learning class was successful in

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helping them learn and integrate their learning into their behavior.

How can we foster collaboration between the not-for-profit sector, the business sector, and higher education to achieve increased civic literacy? If corporations partner with higher education service-learning programs to develop centers for community involvement and civic literacy, the centers could provide ongoing service-learning programs. Moreover, they could coordinate major volunteer activities involving the business employees and college faculty, staff, and students; establish service-based scholarship endowments; and serve as facilitators for training servant leaders for both the private and public sectors.

Service-learning is a powerful teaching strategy. It requires serious collaboration between a college's academic and student development leaders. It must be faculty-led to maintain academic integrity, and it must engage members of the community in the educational process for students. The most valuable contribution service-learning makes is increasing students' appreciation of the importance of citizenship even as they work toward achieving course competencies.

Robert J. Exley, *Office of the District President*

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Comics in the Classroom

A delegation of English-as-a-Second-Language students, unable to attend regular summer classes, wanted to keep practicing their English so as not to lose their skills before the fall semester. In particular, they wanted to form a class that would teach them how to read the newspaper. We talked about the newspaper, and eventually I came to understand that the comic strips were their most difficult section. "Ah-ha!" I thought. I have been interested in comic books, from Peanuts to Dilbert, since I was a kid. I love humor and thought this would be a great way to share some laughs with the students. We started a club and decided to meet weekly throughout the summer.

It quickly became clear that explaining the comic strips and fostering discussion on the topics they contained would be difficult for second-language learners for several reasons. The humor in the strip is based on what is *not* said. ESL students are usually very concrete; picking up the nuances of words and phrases is a sophisticated language skill. I remember making a comment about Data, the android in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* taking things too literally, but the students just looked at me like *I* was from another planet. The amount of culture inherent in the strip is astounding. As I looked at the different levels of humor encapsulated in only one strip, I realized that the author was striving to share several common perceptions—each was kind of a "nudge-nudge, wink-wink." Finally, I remembered hearing Jerry Lewis say: "All humor is based on pain." I thought he was probably commenting on how tired he was at the end of his telethon; and at the time, his comment passed right over me. But when I started to explain and discuss comic strips and saw the concerned looks on the students' faces, I began to listen to myself: "No, it's really funny because the cow is going to kill the chicken!" and "The humor is in how the IRS is going to charge this guy a million bucks for nothing!" I remember one student saying, "Teacher, why is it funny for the disrespectful boy to make fun of his mother?"

The answers lay in how well the reader could identify with the author and depended upon their sharing the same notions of right and wrong. The discussions these comic strips generated were woven around gender relations, family, age, violence, love, slang and, of course, O. J. Simpson.

By the end of the summer, the students were contemplating their own comic strip—created for and by students. This led to discussions of propriety and how to craft a joke that is least harmful, based on the aforementioned pain principle. Perhaps that would be a good title for a strip, too, about a sadistic school administrator, "The Pain Principal."

Having a good sense of humor and understanding metaphors have been correlated with lowered blood pressure and decreased risk of heart attack. Humor stimulates the limbic system which, in turn, charges factoids and makes them more accessible to memory.

This comic club helped students retain their language skills over the summer, stimulated discussions about a variety of issues, and provided opportunities to talk about culture and communication. And it was good for our hearts!

John Pellitteri, *ESL Counselor*

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The Responsible Student

I have always hoped to encounter an ideal class, a class consisting entirely of motivated, responsible, and dedicated students. Unfortunately, I have never encountered such a class. Many students do not meet my idealistic expectations. Are these students really irresponsible and not dedicated to the educational process, or are they simply unaware of what is expected of them at the college level? Being the eternal optimist, I have concluded that the actual problem is that many students really do not understand what is expected of them, perhaps not only in school but also in the workplace.

Desiring to more fully and clearly explain my expectations, I now include a "Letter to the Student" in my syllabus. This letter not only describes my classroom expectations, it also describes workplace expectations to the student. The first semester that I included my letter in the syllabus, I was amazed by the number of students who said this was the first time that an instructor's expectations were so clearly expressed. While this letter may not guarantee the "ideal class," my students are now more aware of my expectations and, as a result, are more willing to try to meet those expectations.

An Open Letter to My Students

Attending college is analogous to being employed. Success on the job is achieved only with hard work and effort. This is also true of college.

Your employer expects you to be on the job everyday and to be on time and prepared to work each day. You are allowed only a specific number of sick days each year after which your pay is "docked." This is also true of economics class. Regular and prompt attendance is essential, and your "sick" days are limited (see syllabus). Excessive absences will result in a loss of "pay" (grade).

Meetings are an essential part of the workplace, and everyone is expected to attend regularly and contribute to the discussion. If you miss an excessive number of meetings and/or do not share vital information, your employment success is in jeopardy. The same holds true for this class. You are not only expected to attend all of our "meetings," but you are expected to contribute to our discussion and analysis of issues. This requires that you come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned material. Failure to do so will put your success in jeopardy and can result in a reduction in your "salary" (grade).

Your employer requires you to submit all reports on time. Failure to do so will endanger your employer's business and your success. The same is true for this class. All "reports" (tests and papers) are due at the scheduled time (see syllabus). If, for a justified reason, you will not be able to meet the time schedule, you must notify me, just as you would contact your employer if you needed an extension. However, as in the workplace, such extensions do not come without a cost. Extensions result in a decrease in your "salary" (grade).

Performance reviews occur periodically in the workplace, and your employer determines the degree of your success during these reviews. Such is the case in this class. The "performance reviews" for economics class are quizzes and exams (see syllabus). These reviews require you to show not only your knowledge of the material, but also your ability to use this knowledge in real-world situations. Your "pay" (grade) depends upon the magnitude of your performance.

If you attend class regularly, participate in class discussions, and submit all materials, well-prepared and in a timely fashion, you have the potential to excel in this class. I am looking forward to working with you and to learning with you. I am always available if you need assistance. Welcome and good luck!

Joyce C. Bremer, *Assistant Professor, Economics*

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An Organizational Puzzle and Discussion

While students can easily memorize structural styles for different essay types, particularly in courses using a modal approach, they do not always appear to grasp that the organization of ideas should develop from the relationships between those ideas within a given structure. Thus, an early draft of an essay based on the structures of cause and effect may be a loose list of causes and effects with very little treatment of the relationships among the various items on the list.

In recent years I have experimented with several versions of the following activity in an attempt to deal with this apparent missing link in teaching organization to beginning college writers. Of the different constructions of this activity that my students and I have used, the following has been the most useful for the immediate needs of the students and for the student-centered focus of my classes.

After students become comfortable with peer-editing in my introductory writing classes, I choose one essay from a recent set of rough drafts, copy it, and physically separate it into paragraphs. This may involve a few minutes with a copy machine and paper cutter (or with a computer and printer if the essay is on disk). Once each paragraph of the essay is on a separate piece of paper, I make copies so that each peer group in the class will have one set of the now-disjointed paragraphs that made up the original paper. I also put one set of these disjointed paragraphs on overhead transparencies.

The goal of each peer group is to reach a consensus concerning the most useful organization for the paragraphs they have been given. This forces them to look at the ideas and rhetorical moves each paragraph employs and to look at the transitional devices used at the beginning and end of each paragraph. In addition, they must find and evaluate such aspects of the essay as its thesis and conclusion as they search for the relationships among the ideas presented in the essay. When the groups have reached their various decisions, I ask a group volunteer to present its ideas to the class. One or two members of this group use an overhead projector and the transparencies of the paragraphs to show the organization which they propose. At each step, we stop and discuss the decisions, a rather freewheeling discussion of the organization of the paper as well as the ideas that it presents.

Obviously, the original essay's author knows the organization and its motivations, so I approach her before the activity begins and ask that she let her peer group discuss freely without becoming a litmus test for their decisions. Later, after the entire class has discussed the essay for a few minutes, I will invite the author to join in if she has not already.

At other times, we have used published articles or essays. This method works well because it reveals the thought and care that accomplished writers employ in word choices, organization, and rhetorical strategies. Sometimes, however, students are paralyzed by their awe of the published word; they are not eager to question writing that has been cleansed in the fire of the publishing process.

Making student drafts the focus of the activity adds a dynamism to the exercise; students recognize that the exercise may actually cause an immediate change in their writing. They may see their peers wrestling with the same problems they are experiencing. Students also seem more willing to question choices the author has made and to discuss organizational issues rather than merely fit the pieces together. With a published article, students tend to look for the "right" way to organize a piece of writing—the way it has been organized by its author. With a student draft, they are more willing to look for the best way, as they see it, to relate and organize ideas. In this respect, this activity almost always generates a great deal of energy and discussion, and it often works well as a confidence-booster because it gives students a clear opportunity to flex their writing knowledge and rhetorical savvy.

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The Viking Expedition: A Summer Program for Current and Future At-risk Students

Introduction: The Need for Truffulas

Plant a new Truffula. Treat it with care. Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air. Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack. Then the Lorax and all of his friends may come back. (*The Lorax*, by Dr. Seuss)

At the St. Augustine Campus of St. Johns River Community College, we spent our summer planting Truffulas so our "friends," current at-risk college students and potential ones, will indeed come back. Our Truffula was The Viking Expedition, a free program designed for children ages 8 through 12. The name was derived from our mascot, the Viking, and from the five-week educational expedition the program offered. The Viking Expedition was designed to teach leadership, provide access to computers and the Internet, promote an understanding of the arts, and reduce fear about science. Though many community colleges hold such summer camps, ours was unique in that the leaders of this Expedition were at-risk college students. By giving these students an opportunity to showcase their talents to children who are growing up in situations that may mirror their own, the Viking Expedition helped these students become more confident in themselves and more focused on their own college experience.

The Participants: Friends of the Lorax

Our friends, the participants in this program, targeted two main groups: children from the local community and our students from at-risk backgrounds. Most of the campers in the Viking Expedition were minority children from low-income households. The college partnered with two local youth agencies, the St. Augustine YMCA and the Willie Galimore Center, to select those children who could benefit most. Permission slips were sent home with the children, and the interest displayed by parents was overwhelming. The children were excited about the opportunity to attend college, and parents welcomed the idea of educational summer activities.

The camp counselors were current at-risk college students who were selected based on their potential leadership abilities as demonstrated in various campus activities. Potential counselors were interviewed one-on-one to determine their interest in the program and their willingness to participate as a volunteer. Again, the response was overwhelming as these college students were more than willing to help children from situations and backgrounds similar to their own. This provided an opportunity for these college students t prove that despite home circumstances, the community college provided an avenue to achievement, both academically and socially. Two counselor training workshops prepared our students for the challenge ahead and ensured that each felt comfortable with his or her leadership role. To complement the expedition theme, each counselor wore khaki shorts and hiking boots, and a polo shirt with the Viking Expedition logo, perfect attire for planting a Truffula.

The Program: Our Truffula

The Viking Expedition was offered over five consecutive Fridays. There was no magic to this schedule other than the college was on a four-day summer schedule, and classrooms and computer labs were vacant on Fridays. The participants arrived on campus at 9:45 a.m. courtesy of the YMCA bus and were divided into groups of 20, each group led by a male and female counselor. Each day began with a large general session consisting of icebreaker activities and discussion of the day's activities. Participants were given color-coded nametags that identified their group for the day.

The individual groups then rotated through three one-hour workshops—leadership, computer, and science or art, depending on the day—with a break for lunch. The leadership workshops were designed around Dr. Seuss movies and books and focused on self-esteem, motivation, conflict resolution, acceptance of others, and goal setting. These workshops were led by our student activities director and were interactive to allow maximum participation from the children.

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The computer workshops were led by campus volunteers, including our public services librarian and our computer lab student worker. The workshops began with an introduction about how a computer works and the basics of navigating the Internet. Since most of these children have not had access to computers or the Internet, these workshops were a special challenge and required considerable help from the counselors. The workshops concluded with each student designing his or her own home page. We found that many children had difficulty reading, which made navigation of the Web almost impossible. Next year, an attempt will be made to determine the reading level of the children and to group them accordingly. Many of our counselors were so concerned about the reading problems that they volunteered as tutors throughout the school year.

The third workshop was considered a wild-card and changed from day-to-day. One day the workshop focused on the sciences. A local science instructor volunteered his time to do experiments such as those on the "Mr. Wizard" television program. Another day the high school drama team volunteered to teach the participants about acting. Each group of children read from one act of *Snow White*. At the conclusion of the day, the three acts were performed together so the students could see the play unfold. On the remaining days, this workshop consisted of an art project in which the students designed stepping stones from cement stones and ceramic tiles donated by local businesses. Two community members volunteered to help the children with this project. The stones were placed on the campus so the children could come back and see their works of art in the years to come. A picture of each child with his or her stone was provided, so the participants could show their handiwork to family and friends.

Each day, lunch was donated by a local business. This free lunch was an important part of the day, as it provided a time for all groups to convene. If individuals were not grouped with friends, they could still sit together during lunch. Our counselors and workshop leaders also were treated to lunch and mingled with the children in a relaxed atmosphere. Our goal was to ensure that having lunch money or bringing a lunch was not a concern for any child.

A closing session each day provided a time for wrap-up and motivation. Children were given stickers throughout the day for "good deeds," and the closing session always included a time for showing these to friends. Friendly competition between groups was encouraged as a way to promote team and leader loyalty.

The cost of the program to the college was approximately $25 per child, much of which was underwritten by business and community members. The positive impact on the lives of these children and the college students that led them is invaluable, based on feedback from children, counselors, and parents. All of our student leaders felt they had gained leadership experience—as a result, some have even chosen careers in education. Based on evaluations given by the children at the end of each day, many now feel that a college education is attainable, and many were very proud to have been a part of the college, if only for a summer. The college gained invaluable connections with local youth organizations, and a front-page article in the local paper helped spread the word of our endeavor to fulfill our middle name—"community." The Viking Expedition proves that helping the growing number of at-risk students is not an insurmountable obstacle, but an achievable dream. St. Johns River Community College will be reaping the fruit of this Truffula forest as the friends of the Lorax return now and in the coming years.

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not. (*The Lorax*, by Dr. Seuss)

Beverlee McClure, *Provost*
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Hiring Faculty for the Next Century

A significant part of the workforce at community colleges is at or approaching retirement age. *Community College Week*, April 7, 1997, reported that 67% of community college presidents plan to retire in the next decade and 65% of the 110,000 full-time instructors are 45 or older—results: many full-time instructors, as well as a majority of community college presidents, will retire and be replaced in the next decade. Community colleges will lose many of their most experienced faculty, but also will have the opportunity to restaff with an eye to the sweeping changes occurring throughout higher education.

As one of those full-time instructors who is 45 (or older) and who has taught at the community college for 28 (or more) years, it is clear to me that a number of specific characteristics will continue to make faculty successful in the community college environment. In addition, faculty must possess a number of new characteristics which will enable them to meet the challenges of the next century. Even the challenges on the immediate horizon—new technologies, economic constraints, changing demographics, and an influx of underprepared students—will demand master teachers who are proficient in the use of technology and who are expert in human relations.

I began thinking about these characteristics after being disappointed by the quality of applications for several administrative and faculty positions at the college, and during a six-week faculty internship at Cirent Semiconductor, where, during a conversation with one of their industrial psychologists about problems locating qualified applicants, I was told: "You're probably not doing a very good job in explaining your expectations." It struck me that was one part of the problem; the other part was defining what those expectations were. To clearly define them, I began with negative examples—e.g., one that always comes to mind is those faculty whose dissatisfaction with their jobs grew the more their jobs deviated from their expectations which, for the most part, were drawn from the traditional, four-year institution.

Most of us understand that a community college faculty position differs significantly from a faculty position at a four-year institution. Specifically, while teaching is the primary duty of community college faculty, faculty also play important roles in a variety of other activities, including advising and counseling students (either formally or informally); assisting in the decision-making processes of the college by serving on college committees, in the senates, and other associations; and sponsoring and/or participating in student activities which enhance student development. It is easy to understand why we must consider the level of professional expertise that is best for us.

Some community colleges, consciously or otherwise, embrace hiring practices inherited from the four-year model. For example, sometimes we pride ourselves on the number of doctorates our faculty hold, as if the doctorate were the most important indicator of a successful and productive employee. Perhaps we should ask, "Will a person who has been successful in individual, advanced research be happy teaching the same introductory courses semester after semester?" Instead of focusing so closely on degrees, we might look for a wider variety of characteristics that include expertise with technology, a dedication to student learning, the ability to use various teaching and learning strategies, a record of innovation, and a mastery of communication skills.

As important as these areas of professional expertise are, at least two other areas are equally important—professional attitudes and abilities. Having watched faculty come and go, I know that these areas, often overlooked, are vital in hiring faculty who will be willing to play all of the roles our jobs entail. Full collaboration with students, other faculty, and administrators requires professional attitudes which stress commitment, responsibility, open-mindedness, flexibility, and the willingness to work hard, among others. Successful cooperation also includes a commitment to synergy, and an ability to accept criticism, handle conflict, and motivate others.

Checklist for Hiring Community College Faculty

A faculty member who has the right combination of professional expertise, attitudes, and abilities will be equipped to meet the challenges of the next century.

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Professional Expertise

- an educational philosophy which places the primary emphasis on student learning in the design, delivery, and evaluation of courses
- an appropriate level of expertise for courses she or he will be teaching
- an understanding of various levels of preparations represented in the typical classroom
- the understanding of various learning styles as demonstrated in development of course materials and assessments of student learning
- the understanding and successful practice of various teaching strategies
- a record of innovations which facilitate student learning
- proficiency in interfacing an understanding of how the academic and business worlds interface, as demonstrated in course curriculum
- the understanding and successful use of learning technology, both on-line and as a tool for distance learning
- the demonstrated ability for written and oral communication

Professional Attitudes

- a commitment to the mission and values of the community college
- a positive attitude, including the ability to see good in self and others
- flexibility, including the acceptance of and willingness to change
- open-mindedness, including fairness and the ability to see multiple perspectives
- the willingness to take risks and try new things
- knowledge of one's personal limits
- a willingness to work hard to get the job done
- the willingness to accept responsibility for professional and personal growth

Professional Abilities

- success and commitment as a team player, including the ability to engage in win-win thinking and to foster consensus
- success at initiating, executing and following up on projects, including the ability to set specific objectives and measure achieved results
- ability to accept criticism
- ability to handle conflict
- ability to motivate others
- ability to lead or to follow.

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On-Line Testing

On-line testing is the computer administration of an exam through either a network system, telecommunications, or personal computer. During the 1996-97 school year, we tested our computer classes via the Course Test Manager (CTM) software from a network server. [The CTM software is supplemental material to the New Perspectives Computer Concepts text by Parsons/Oja (ISBN 0-7600-34397).]

There are three types of computer-based testing. *Adaptive testing* hones in on an examinee's ability level in order to test at that level. An algorithm selects questions that are appropriate to an individual's ability—i.e., the test software uses an individual's performance on one question to determine which question will be asked next. Different test-takers answer different questions, and questions will become more difficult as test-takers answer questions correctly. Conversely, as test-takers answer questions incorrectly, subsequent questions will be easier. This type is frequently used for standardized testing purposes and is based on algorithms that have been refined and tested for more than 20 years.

Mastery testing is a variation of adaptive testing. It is used to determine whether the test-taker has attained a specific level of knowledge or mastery of a subject. Testing ends when the test-taker's ability has been precisely determined—i.e., when either a passing or failing grade is earned. This type of testing, most frequently used for certification purposes, is the next wave of testing.

Linear testing presents all test-takers with the same set of questions and is the subject of this article.

Deciding to Test On-Line

It is important to investigate the software before deciding to administer on-line exams. Ignore flashy packaging and any advisory that the software is user-friendly—exploring a software package is the only way to determine if it is user-friendly. Try a test-run yourself, and have someone else perform a test-run, as well. Finally, have your students take an on-line practice test before giving the real on-line exam.

Drawbacks of Testing On-Line

On-line testing presents some unique problems. For example, we spent time getting our students ready for the idea of on-line testing: they watched us take an on-line test, and they practiced an on-line exam as a class. [A test-run exam meant making lab reservations, a reminder that on-line testing requires planning.]

Since we tested by way of a network server, we had to contact our network administrator and explain what we needed so that the testing software could be loaded onto the network server. Network administrators are very popular, busy people.

Another unique drawback of on-line testing is the "down time" that occurs when a student:

- cannot access the software,
- is stuck and cannot move at all, a momentary freeze, .
- is kicked out of the software, or
- takes the exam but does not see the earned score.

Students were instructed to call on us if they experienced any of these problems. In the first scenario, students are not able to access the software if there are not enough authorized users for simultaneous use. During the practice on-line midterm exam, this problem was solved by contacting the network administrator who provided additional authorizations for simultaneous use.

In the second scenario, more often than not the student is a "clicker," clicking several times before giving the software time to execute the instruction. In this case, we explain patience to the "clicker"—that the machine is not as fast as we want it to be and that it needs time to follow instructions. This explanation usually works.

In the third scenario, the network coughs, and a student is booted out at random. If it is at the beginning or the middle of the exam, the student can log in again and start over. If it is at the end of an exam, the student has the option of logging in again and starting over or taking the exam on paper. This means accessing a hard copy of the exam and circling the answers to the questions already answered on the computer.

In the fourth scenario, the student takes the exam without a hitch until the very end when no dialog box opens to indicate a score. In this case, the software has usually not recorded a score for any of the questions. Hard copy is again necessary for recording the answers.

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The traditional pencil-and-paper test complaints are also heard about on-line testing. Some students will complain that the exam was too hard, others will think it is fair, but the majority do not say anything unless asked to comment.

Other concerns about pencil-and-paper tests haunt on-line testing, too—e.g., wandering eyes and the proverbial cheat sheets. Scrambling the questions on the exam helps control the problem of wandering eyes; any testing software worth its salt will have a scrambling option. Cheat sheets are a different matter; providing a clear definition and describing the consequences of dishonesty will be helpful.

How to Test On-Line

We wanted to understand testing on-line and know what was out there, so we researched helpful sites. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) by the University of Minnesota was especially helpful. This FAQ document is thorough and informative with links to helpful sites.

We consulted with available local sources. For example, a colleague who used instructional technology suggested that we determine if adequate on-line testing facilities were available. We were counseled to gauge the receptivity factors within our division and the cooperation factors outside our division. The facilities factor was met—there is an electronic classroom on campus with enough seats for a medium-size class. The receptivity factors were met through the chair of the department, and the cooperation factors were met through the director of academic computing.

Benefits of Testing On-Line

Surprisingly, grade distributions for on-line tests have been remarkably similar to those for paper-and-pencil exams. However, the student benefits from testing on-line are significant, including instant gratification, practice for quizzes, and enhanced computer skills. Students appreciate knowing their grade before leaving the examination room, as well as obtaining a raw score and a percentage score.

The software includes chapter quizzes that students take at their leisure in the open lab. Students can retake a twenty-question chapter quiz as many times as they like, but every retake presents a different combination of chapter questions from a huge data bank. Many have learned that by taking multiple chapter quizzes, in combination with other learning activities, they can improve their final grade.

As instructors, we can monitor quiz-taking and quiz-scoring through the "Practice Summary" screen. The "Practice Summary" screen details a student's performance, the number of practice sessions performed, the chapters covered, and the number of correct practice responses. This feature of the software is particularly useful in evaluating students who have borderline grades.

One of the major benefits of testing on-line is moving one step closer to a paperless classroom; we can avoid making literally hundreds of exam copies. We are able to access and view results of on-line tests and practice tests at a computer monitor. For example, the report that we access after an exam is the "Posted Test Results Screen." This screen is a listing by student name and social security number, and raw and percentage scores achieved by all of the students taking the exam. Another is the "Answer Summary Screen" which identifies the answers selected by each student for each question on the exam. This screen also summarizes the raw and percentage scores.

Finally, testing on-line allows students to complete tests as late as the day grades are due. All in all, testing on-line has some important benefits that make it a useful learning tool. By the end of the semester, students have used the computer to engage in almost every curriculum and instruction activity—from preparing assignments on the computer, to sending results via e-mail, to taking on-line exams.

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It Could Never Happen Here

No campus is immune to the threat of violence, but the "it could never happen here" mentality is probably the major reason why little has been done to address a very serious problem. On March 14, 1996, OSHA issued anti-violence guidelines covering workers in health care and social services. Given the alarming surge in the national statistics regarding workplace violence, it is likely that there will be additional guidelines covering workers in many other categories. For example, the most recent NIOSH data (June 1996) indicate that homicide is now the leading cause of occupational death for working women and the second major cause for males.

Fortunately, most college campuses are still relatively safe places, at least according to the Justice Department's most recent analysis (December 1996) of campus crime statistics. The "safer" campuses, however, are those which employ security officers with full arrest powers and deploy their security personnel in adequate numbers—not the usual situation on many community college campuses.

In fact, individuals working or studying at community colleges may be at higher risk than their counterparts at other places. Among community college students are many older, displaced workers trying to retrain themselves or regain their self-esteem. Others are seeking education as a means of escaping dysfunctional family situations, and domestic abuse "spill over" is a well-documented cause of many violent workplace incidents. Many students find themselves mired in difficult school/work schedule trade-offs, sometimes on a daily basis. Faculty, administrators, and support personnel have been victims of downsizing or reorganization. Regrettably, if the stress load becomes unbearable, violence can be one result. Certain sensible precautions are in order.

Policy or preventive measures cannot guarantee that violent episodes will not occur, any more than a policy forbidding sexual harassment will bring such behavior to a complete halt. But a company or a college without an enforced anti-harassment policy is much more vulnerable when a complaint or legal action is initiated. In the aftermath of a violent episode, college officials who have made good faith efforts to acknowledge and address student/employee concerns about campus violence may fare better than others who have ignored the problem, naively believing that "it could never happen here."

A simple questionnaire will provide a good start. Results can help college officials pinpoint concerns, ranging from complaints about inadequate lighting to outright fears expressed about individuals employed by or encountered on campus. (It should be noted that negligent hiring and negligent retention cases are becoming increasingly common in litigation.)

Once the questionnaire responses have been tabulated and communicated to a prevention/intervention team, policy and procedural responses can be developed to guide the college's reactions to perceived threats, including due process protections for those accused of posing a danger to themselves or others. Members of the prevention/intervention team could be identified to the campus community as the first step in a reporting procedure for students and staff. Too often, people who are concerned that a particular individual may resort to violence have nowhere to go or no one to whom they can report their concerns. As a result, critical intervention opportunities may be missed, with predictable and tragic results.

Qualified people who could serve on a prevention/intervention team may already be on campus—people who by nature of their backgrounds, training, or responsibilities may be very capable of investigating initial complaints and/or recommending appropriate action to administrators.

Questions to consider when assessing the state of readiness on your campus include:

- Would students and employees benefit from personal safety/workplace violence workshops?
- Are students and staff aware of the early signs that sometimes provide advanced warning that violence may be imminent (e.g., dramatic changes in dress, personal hygiene, or work habits; abusive domestic situations; depression, chemical dependence, fascination with weapons, etc.)?
- Are staff in "high stress" areas such as the business or financial aid office trained to defuse situations or ready with an emergency evacuation

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plan? Have silent alarms ("panic buttons") been installed in these office areas?

- Are faculty and staff likely to be trapped by their own office landscaping in the event of a violent episode?
- Have campus security personnel collaborated with local police authorities to develop emergency response procedures in the event of a violent episode?
- Is there an Employee Assistance Program available, and are policies in place to provide leaves for employees needing counseling or crisis intervention services?
- Do students/employees know where to go if they have concerns about their physical safety, especially if they are being stalked or subjected to other types of threats?
- Given the irregular hours worked by many college faculty, is someone in an official capacity always aware of exactly who is in the building(s) and where they are?
- Have students and employees been taught to recognize that fire alarms may be used to signal other situations and that such alarms can be pulled to encourage others to evacuate the premises during a violent event?
- Are procedures in place for dealing with the aftermath of a violent episode? Have prevention/intervention team members been assigned to handle everything from de-briefings to public relations functions?

Obviously, the time to ask such questions is *before* a serious incident happens. A small amount of what some would regard as alarmism is obviously preferable to the hand-wringing, finger-pointing, and Monday-morning quarterbacking which will occur in the wake of a violent episode. If nothing else, precautions signal that the college is serious about trying to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone on campus.

We at Tompkins Cortland have taken the first steps towards confronting the violence threat—a personal safety/workplace violence workshop was conducted; student/employee questionnaire results are currently being reviewed by a prevention/intervention team that will be making recommendations regarding training needs and leave policies; and outside security consultants will be conducting a "campus walkaround" to help identify physical risks that can be reduced or eliminated. The college's attorneys will be reviewing an anti-violence "zero-toleration" policy that is now in the early stages of development.

None of these steps will guarantee a violence-free campus, and we hope that none of these precautions will ever be put to the test. But at least we are no longer among those who still cling to the notion that "it could never happen here."

Joe Cambridge, *Professor, English*

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Help for the Dysfunctional Class

We've all had them: the classes from hell! Sometimes about three or four weeks from the end of the semester we think we simply cannot meet this particular group of students even one more time. Sometimes we just get burned out from the overwhelming responsibilities of our jobs, but more often the trouble is the chemistry of some particular class. Either students have become so "collaborative" that all they do is socialize and "bond," or they have fallen behind and refuse to respond to any of the motivational tricks in our bags. Whatever the reason, the class's integrity and climate have so degenerated that we feel no quality learning can take place. If we continue to meet the class as it is, we risk finishing it with little enthusiasm if not downright disgust, which, in turn, leaves students with the proverbial bad taste in their mouths for our subjects or, even worse, for our institutions. There is no reason to endure this torture. In fact, several creative solutions exist, but I want to offer one that has worked for me: **I dismiss the class for the rest of the semester**.

That is right. I dismiss the class as a class, and I arrange to meet the students for one-on-one tutoring for the remainder of the semester. This semester, I decided that I could not spend even one more day in my late-in-the-afternoon Monday and Wednesday developmental writing class. The students in that class were all fresh out of high school and extremely immature. Their social life revolved around this group of classmates; and try as I might with all kinds of collaboration and outlets for exuberance (not enthusiasm for the material of the class, unfortunately), I found myself shrieking at them to settle down, work (I teach composition in a computer classroom), and get assignments completed well and on time. I resented this group of students for I felt they took unfair advantage of my supportive and nourishing nature, and I felt hostile toward them for their lack of respect and motivation. I knew that if I continued to try to teach them anything as a group, we would all end up hating each other. So I dismissed class for the remainder of the semester. It is, of course, imperative to have administrative support for this type of creative solution. (I had it.)

Since three weeks of the semester remained in a four-credit-hour class, I decided to meet each student four times for at least an hour each session in the remaining three weeks. I reasoned that one hour of quality time equals four hours of wasted time. I also designed written assignments that would require that students spend as much time writing outside of class as they would have spent in class. (That would not be hard to do since their productivity in class had dropped to almost zero.) Students signed up to meet with me in my office or in the writing lab during the same times as the regularly scheduled class. I also offered them other times: my office hours or my lab hours. An agreed-upon task was due at every session.

The results of this solution were amazing. Students I never had heard from in a classroom setting were, all of a sudden, vocal and articulate; they seemed to be thinking! Students who had put off assignments until they stepped into the computer classroom were now spending time in the computer writing lab, getting their drafts ready to present to me for their one-on-one conference. Students did not murmur backtalk under their breath because there were no cronies there to hear them. They did not act out for the same reason. They did not laugh off their errors, but rather took themselves and their assignments seriously, for now there were no high-school friends for whom to feign indifference. They looked at me when we talked. They treated me with respect. It is much easier to disrespect a teacher in a group than face-to-face. They responded to questions I asked them because there was no one else there to rescue them from the dreaded answer-the-teacher's-question ordeal. In short, they began behaving somewhat like the college students I had expected them to be all along. What a wonder these sessions became! I regained a love of my job. I felt smart and witty and wise. Mondays and Wednesdays were no longer hellacious times that made me rue the day I became a teacher! In fact, I preferred meeting my students this way to meeting my classes that were still functioning well as a class!

I can see this strategy working equally well in math, reading, foreign language, or any other course that does not require the delivery of lecture-based materials to large numbers of students at one time. Yet, these are not normally the classes from hell. In a lecture-based class, a

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savvy instructor can perform well enough at least to amuse him/herself for the rest of the semester, even in a dysfunctional class. And large numbers of students more or less guarantee a distance that provides relief from direct student provocation. No, it is normally the small, collaborative classes that dissolve into disorder and dysfunction for some reason or another. If it happens to you, try dismissing your class!

Karen Standridge, *Instructor, Developmental English*

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Self-Assessment in a Public Speaking Course

Assessment and student ownership of his/her own learning are components of a successful basic public speaking course. Students are involved in self-assessment of their own educational goals and objectives from the first day of class until the final exam speech.

During the first or second day of class, students are divided into groups. Once in their groups, they get acquainted and brainstorm about possible speech goals for the semester and in future classes and careers. They develop a set of behavioral objectives which will enable them to reach their goals during the semester. These objectives are personal behaviors to which they pledge themselves, such as attending class regularly, reading the text, preparing for speeches well in advance, etc. Each student then presents his/her goals and behavioral objectives to the class during a three- to four-minute speech. These speeches are not graded. However, I emphasize that the final exam speech will be based on the goals and objectives they set in this initial presentation. Knowing this, students rise to the challenge and make an effort to set realistic goals and objectives they feel that they can meet during the following 16 weeks.

This assignment has several benefits. First, it allows the students to get to know each other during the first week of class. It gets them on their feet in front of the class to make a presentation. Perhaps the greatest feature of this assignment is that it encourages them to think about their educational goals for the course and take ownership of their own learning. To alleviate the potential problem of this becoming an abstract exercise of setting unreachable goals without committing to personal action, students must set up their behavioral objectives. Here they must be fully, actively involved in the process.

During the semester students are required to keep a Speaker's Notebook. In this notebook, students log their own progress in meeting their goals and objectives. An additional component of this notebook is the students' critiques of all speeches they hear. Students may have seen these speeches on T.V. or heard them in classroom lectures. Students have "share days" at designated times during the semester when they share their progress with established goals and objectives.

The students' motivation for constant assessment is the final exam, a self-assessment speech of five to seven minutes, discussing their accomplishments/failures in meeting their goals and objectives.

Students generally organize these speeches in one of two ways. They set up the first main point of the speech as one major goal and assessment of that goal, including the behavioral objectives they employed in meeting it. The second main point would be their second major goal and assessment of how well they reached that goal, etc. For example, the first main point might be a general goal, such as to become a credible speaker. The subpoints then might be minor goals leading to the major goal—i.e., to be knowledgeable, to be well-practiced, to be poised. The behaviors then would become the "how they did that" of reaching those goals—specifically, how many times did they practice, and how much research did they do? Or they can organize their final speech by making the first main point an assessment of their goals and the second point an assessment of how well they met their behavioral objectives.

Some superb speeches have been made during the final exams. As much as students object to the assignment in the beginning and complain that they will never have enough to say about goals to fill five minutes, they have much to say by the end of the term. Many are astonished that they made such progress in their speaking, and even more are surprised that they had so much to say about goal-setting.

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In the Pursuit of Trivia: Improving Student Performance

After teaching college chemistry in Ohio for 25 years, I opted for early retirement. My objective was not to abandon teaching but to escape the cold northern climate. I found similar employment in sunny Florida and adjusted to the weather and the new position, but experienced one annoying situation—about half the students in my early morning pre-general chemistry class were either absent or late. Colleagues observed that this situation is not uncommon in large urban community colleges, but tardiness and absenteeism were definitely contributing to poor performance for many students. Appeals on the importance of attending lecture appeared to fall on deaf ears, and I became obsessed with reducing tardiness and absenteeism.

As often happens, an idea surfaced in the middle of the night. My teaching style includes using anecdotes, historical events, analogies, personal narratives, as well as obscure facts. While such tidbits usually do not find their way into students' notebooks, they appear to be remembered. My new strategy called for adding a few trivia questions, worth one point each, to exams. Since students could answer these bonus questions only by having come to class, I reasoned that attendance would soar.

Although past experiences have taught me that terrific ideas at three in the morning have a way of fizzling out when put into practice, I was determined to proceed with the plan. So, I announced my intent and began recording potential trivia sources immediately after each lecture. For example:

Lewis is the greatest American chemist not to...? (win a Nobel Prize)

The "tiger of chemistry" is...? (fluorine)

Who was Gilbert? (lowest pressure hurricane to hit western hemisphere)

What is the analogy between shell/subshell/orbital/spin and ticket to Jaguar's football game? (gate/section/row/seat)

Who was the grandfather of Olivia Newton-John? (?)

Did trivia reduce tardiness and absenteeism? Of course not, but certain other changes were apparent. Students attending regularly were amused by the questions, took delight in earning bonus points, and often suggested prospective questions. On the other hand, students with sporadic attendance would leave responses blank or make outrageous guesses.

Sometimes the trivia generated more interest than did the actual exam questions. One case comes to mind. To demonstrate how we accumulate knowledge of the atom without seeing atoms directly, I passed a sealed box around the room. Students were allowed to manipulate but not open the box. On the next exam, a trivia question asked students to cite a demonstration utilizing a shark's tooth. As soon as the exam ended, students converged around me wanting to know whether the small mysterious box contained a shark's tooth.

I still combat tardiness and absenteeism, and my syllabus includes this requirement and potential penalty:

> Anyone late or absent must obtain class notes and meet with the instructor to review these notes. Failure to do so within one week results in a deduction of two points from the course average.

This strategy has worked; students prefer to attend class rather than endure the "dreaded" meeting with instructor. Students are not forced to attend class but are forced to obtain help when they have been absent.

At last, all is well with my second teaching career—the annoying attendance problem has vanished, and trivia have emerged as part of my repertoire in all courses. By the way, Max Born, the Nobel Prize winning physicist who coined the term "quantum mechanics" and co-developed the Born-Haber cycle, was also the grandfather of singer Olivia Newton-John.

Edwin Thall, *Professor, Chemistry*

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Content-Based ESL Instruction

A fortuitous congruence of learners and learning materials made for some particularly rich content-based instruction in an advanced English as a Second Language course. Having completed an apparently useful, if unremarkable, review of a writing technique—variously known as reported speech, indirect discourse, and hearsay—I proceeded to read an essay on the Vietnam War to a class of 26 international and immigrant students. Knowing that the oldest member of the class had held a position of some importance in the South Vietnamese army and had been imprisoned in the North for 14 years, I asked if he would serve as informant and submit to an interview by his classmates. Some of these students had emigrated from Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia at such an early age that they knew virtually nothing about the war that had profoundly altered the course of their lives. To my relief, the retired officer was pleased—even flattered—at the opportunity to reveal his reaction to the essay we had just read and to inform his young classmates about a significant historical event.

In order to support the quality of the class discussion, I asked each student to compose a few questions based on either the essay in the textbook or an area of personal interest. (Thus, a Laotian teenager whose father had also been a soldier chose to ask whether the Vietnamese officer had any knowledge of the war in Laos.) After devoting part of the class period to self- and peer-editing of the questions, I collected, collated, and put them on an overhead transparency.

The next day, as the war veteran stood before the class, I projected his classmates' names and questions onto a screen. Then, I asked students to restate, in indirect form, the original questions that appeared on the screen. For example, one student said: "Sanae wants to know how Colonel Luat kept from becoming depressed while he was a prisoner of war." Another pursued a controversial topic: "Nathalia asked Colonel Luat if he resented the American interference in his country's internal politics." As the dignified septuagenarian delivered patient, measured answers, his classmates' polite interest evolved into hushed awe. When he came to the end of the list of questions, there was a round of applause, motivated not only by simple civility but by spontaneous appreciation for a real lesson in public history and personal stoicism.

Having recorded the interview on audio tape, I transcribed some of the colonel's answers to make a second transparency, which we used in class the following day. Students used them to clarify certain facts surrounding the war and further refine their English usage with respect to direct and indirect discourse. The learning activity was so successful that word of it spread to another class, where students demanded and were allowed to repeat the exercises.

Applied linguists have long recognized the virtues of authentic texts and content-based instruction. When combined with a wise informant bearing a sober message, they may help classroom instruction realize its full potential.

J. R. Gilleland, *Professor, Foreign Languages*

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A Successful Method for Teaching Logical Fallacies

At least since Aristotle, teachers of rhetoric have attempted to explain and illustrate the various logical fallacies for their students; and for at least that long, many of those students have stared blankly at the instruction. In that grand tradition, I spent several years attempting to search out and identify the perfect examples that would make the slippery slope and ad populum arguments sensible to my students. But each semester my efforts were far less than successful. One semester, however, one of my students inadvertently provided me with a new method for presenting this topic. I have used this method, with great success, ever since.

The breakthrough came when the student, Rebecca, came to my office, irritated by my comments on one of her papers. Although she did so without using the proper terminology, Rebecca pointed out that I seemed to be employing a false dilemma argument in my comments. She had a point and stuck to it resolutely. "There are more than two possible interpretations for this material," she insisted. She was right, and I was impressed that she recognized a subtle point like this one. After completing our conversation, inspired by her fervor, I set to work on a new class plan.

I walked into the classroom the next day and immediately handed a card to each student. "These are the grades and comments for the papers you just turned in," I pronounced. The students were somewhat confused, as they had not turned in anything, but they quickly realized from my actions and rather broad hints that this was a game and they were simply to play along.

"I must say that these papers were somewhat disappointing. Perhaps we can all learn from each other. Would anyone care to share their grade and their comments with the class?" I asked. No one spoke, so I continued. "Does anyone have any problem with what I've written to you?"

After a few hesitant moments, a hand went up. "Yes, I don't like this at all," a young man said.

"Really?" I replied. "And would you mind telling everyone what grade is on your card?"

"It's an 'F,'" the student answered.

"Oh, how many of you got an 'F'?" I continued.

All the hands went up, and a snicker passed across the room. At this point, anyone who had not caught on was made aware of the game.

"And what is the comment on your card?" I prodded.

"This has far too many spelling errors. Either I pass you and let standards go down the drain, or I fail you and hurt your feelings. You flunk!" he said, to the laughter of the class.

"And do you have a problem with that?" I asked, hoping that he would.

Within moments, he explained in his own words—words quite similar to those that Rebecca had used about what a false dilemma fallacy was. He explained that there was at least one additional option: I could allow him to revise the paper. Other students were soon chiming in with possible suggestions. Only after allowing them to explain the concept fully did I go to the board and point out what sort of a fallacy this was. We then continued through the other cards. Each time someone read a card, we discussed the error in reasoning. In the course of an hour, we covered all of the fallacies presented in the textbook, and the students seemed to grasp the concepts well. Amazingly, they later demonstrated that they could apply this learning in more useful situations, picking considerably more sophisticated fallacies from the works of such writers as William Buckley and Molly Ivins.

Now I use this strategy every semester, and the results are similarly positive. While students often fail to recognize and understand the logical flaws in writing that seems distant and disconnected from them, they have little trouble picking out the flaws when that writing is essential to them—i.e., when it will be graded. The students who would have never seen an appeal to authority in an essay are quick to point out that "Stephen King hates this sort of writing. You flunk!" does not adequately justify a grade. Those who would not flinch at an ad hominem in public discourse are quick to react when their card says, "What should I expect from someone with nose rings and tattoos? You flunk!" (This card I typically try to give to the most conventional-looking member of the class.)

This teaching method rests on a simple premise.

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Students seem to understand and engage texts best when they feel that there is something important at stake; and if we teachers are honest, we will admit that we more quickly see the logical flaws or factual errors in the pronouncements of political candidates we oppose or when we feel that the message is threatening. Students who appear terribly imperceptive when reading and discussing issues that we hold dear are often the same ones who display considerable critical acumen when someone criticizes their favorite band.

That day in my office, Rebecca did more than simply point out a possible flaw in my reasoning. She caused me to rethink some of my core teaching methods. The changes I made as a result have made my classes more enjoyable and my students more successful.

Mark Browning, *Instructor, English*

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Betting to Win

One of the challenges facing most developmental studies math teachers is student motivation. For the first few weeks of classes, we face continuous cries of, "I shouldn't be here! I know this stuff!" So, in an effort to start some healthy competition, I always make a bet the day before the first test.

After we review, I ask students who think they will make an A on the test to raise their hands. There are always lots of hands. My response, "Wanna bet?" starts the game. This is always fun. "What do you mean?" and "Bet what?" come from my now-captive audience. From here, I establish the ground rules. The bet is one non-alcoholic drink (usually a soda). Students who take the bet must put it in writing and indicate their drink preference. I show up with the drinks of their choice if they make an A. The students who do not make an A must bring me a Coca Cola Classic to the next class.

This game helps motivate everyone. Students want to win. So, even the students who feel they already know the material will spend time reviewing on their own before the test. The bet also starts a conversation about the difference between "getting by with a C" and succeeding in the course. Many of my students have just graduated from high school and do not yet understand that the goal should not be to get out of *my* class, but to complete successfully the college math sequence of courses. The bet helps open this line of communication.

I bring the drinks on ice in a cooler so that no one knows who won by the drinks on display. As winners come up, I pull out their drinks and make a big production of presenting them. The class usually teases me for losing. When I win, I simply write on their papers that they owe me and leave it at that. Usually there is good-natured grumbling and expressions of "I will get you next time!"

We continue this pattern for the entire semester. There will be several bets before some tests and none before others. Once a class bet me that every student would pass. I took that bet. The class worked very hard as a group to make sure everyone was well-prepared and understood the material. That was the best bet I ever lost!

Students have fun coming up with off-the-wall drinks for me to find. The most difficult was Food Lion Kiwi Strawberry Soda. This method has raised morale and encouraged many students who would not normally do so to study and review.

Ellyn Webb, *Instructor, Mathematics*

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The Faculty Learning Academy

At Pima Community College, we were challenged to develop a comprehensive program for all faculty that were new to the district, and we wanted it to be so attractive that even our returning faculty would ask to participate. We decided to establish a two-week Faculty Learning Academy. The purpose of the academy was to introduce all new faculty to the changing models of education and remind returning faculty of the challenges these changes would create. We did not intend to address housekeeping and orientation details during the academy experience.

The goal of the academy was to create a cohort of highly motivated faculty who would positively influence the culture of the college. For about $3,700 per participant, the college developed a strong cohort, well-schooled in adult learning. This investment was clearly minimal when compared to the investment the district would make in each faculty member over an average 20-year teaching career.

The Process

A task force, including some recently hired faculty and administrators, met to generate ideas for the first academy. Meeting primarily on-line, the group identified four pre-screening questions for potential consultants. A listserv for professional development in higher education was the forum for soliciting responses to the pre-screening questions. The top five consultants were invited to the college for a morning panel presentation and afternoon individual interviews.

The Program

The new faculty were surveyed to identify their areas of expertise so that a flexible program could be designed to meet their specific needs. The rich diversity of the Southwest was a unifying theme; topics included the college mission, adult learning, classroom assessment strategies, technology in the classroom, and student perspectives. Consultants and participants modeled adult learning principles. The Columbia University Biospere 2, a research and education center, provided an appropriate backdrop for demonstrations of active teaching strategies.

Administrators from the college's five campuses and two district offices provided guided tours and luncheons. The new faculty met staff and learned about their duties at the college. A scavenger hunt introduced new faculty to key individuals at the central office. A new fitness and sports sciences faculty member provided activities for short physical breaks.

Follow-Up

Special activities, including lunch with the chancellor and a colloquium on Generation X students, have encouraged continued dialog between participants. Follow-up evaluations have demonstrated that this group is a cohesive cohort that has completed an exceptional year of achievements.

When asked to identify conference highlights, academy participants mentioned college responsiveness to the group's needs, the opportunity to visit all seven college sites, valuable resources (including books and articles), active and collaborative activities, academy organization and logistics, and development of a support network.

Future Academies

The success of the first academy resulted in the design of two academies for the next academic year—another two-week academy for new incoming faculty and a one-week Faculty Learning Community for 20 returning faculty. Volunteers from last year's academy and this year's community are being designated as mentors to new faculty. The legacy of the learning academy community is a dedicated faculty who will exert a positive influence on the college well into the new millennium.

Rosemarie Schulz, *Dean, Business, Liberal Arts and Visual Communication*
Gail Gonzales, *Director, Employee Relations and Development*

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It's Hydraulics, Not Hyperbole! Machine, Not Metaphor!

Our Center for Advanced Productivity (Training for Business and Industry) contracted with an international auto manufacturer to provide 20 contact hours of instruction in basic grammar for interested employees. All of the employees who enrolled had taken some entry-level college courses, but they requested to begin with the basics—and they were very vocal about their negative experiences with grammar!

They studied basic sentences, subjects and verbs, subject-verb agreement, verb tense, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences; worked on reading comprehension skills; practiced the basic principles of paragraph writing; and created outlines. They brought their laptop computers to the final sessions and created memoranda and technical reports.

On the surface, the content and work sounded fairly traditional. However, students commented on how well the relatively unfamiliar content was being taught. The instructor asked how this class was different from other English classes the students had taken, and they identified what they believed to be the key factor: Workplace terminology was used in teaching traditional content. The instructor had designed the in-class practices to use language related to students' workplace experiences; they were reading and writing about familiar information—not a novel idea, but an often-overlooked strategy. Everyone feels more comfortable when working in a familiar setting and will make more progress when the fear of trying is removed.

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Workshopping That Works

In theory, peer-editing in the writing class is a good instructional tool; but in practice, it has problems. Editing is inconsistent—some students are excellent editors; others are terribly inadequate. Lists of workshopping questions help somewhat, but the basic problem persists. Some students are reluctant to criticize, and problems cannot be fixed if they are not noticed. Stronger writers complain that their drafts do not receive adequate attention. Not all students have drafts ready on workshopping days—some have nothing or only a paragraph or two. I could grade every essay twice (once for the rough draft, once for the final), but the resulting workload would be demoralizing.

My solution has been moving to a large-group (entire-class) format. Although this method needs to be adapted to each individual class, depending on the number of students and course essays, it works.

Early in the semester, I distribute the course calendar that includes workshop dates—one for each essay. I briefly describe each essay assignment, throw numbered slips of paper in a hat, and conduct a lottery. Lower numbers are first to choose a workshop—usually three students per essay. I make a record and read it back to the class. The syllabus explains the workshopping system and then advises: "The most important part of your class-participation grade is being prepared for your assigned workshop session(s)—the whole class is depending on you. And being 'prepared' means having the photocopies ready, too."

Each essay follows a pattern. We spend a class period discussing the essay assignment, reading the assignment sheet, and looking at some models together. I announce the names of the students who are signed up for that workshop and get some acknowledgment from each that the assignment is clear. If a student has not been attending or misses the next class, I sometimes make a call. If I decide that a student is unable to perform for any reason, I ask for a volunteer to take the slot. Sometimes students will trade with others for original choices; at other times, I offer extra class-participation credit to students who will conduct an additional workshop. Overall, I expend far less energy badgering students, partly due to peer pressure. The entire class knows who has signed up; if a student drops the ball, the teacher is not the only one who is miffed.

On the day of the workshop, we circle the chairs, and the responsible students circulate their drafts. At least every other student is to have a copy (students can share to keep costs down). We briefly recap the assignment and decide who will go first. That student reads his draft aloud (I'll sometimes read for seriously intimidated ESLs), and we read along. We then discuss the draft, using a PQS system:

- Praise—What's good here in terms of the assignment? (Putting praise first seems to reassure students.)
- Questions—What would you like to know more about? What don't you understand?
- Suggestions—What ideas do you have for improving this piece?

Incidentally, I encourage students to textmark, using the same system during the reading—a checkmark for something good, a question mark where they have a question, etc. We spend 15 to 25 minutes on each draft, depending on how productive the discussion is and how much class time I have and wish to invest.

The final draft is due about a week later. I usually give students a revision option after returning the graded papers (still far less work than grading double sets of essays for every assignment).

Not every student's draft is workshopped, but students learn lessons they can apply to their own. Students can stop by during my office hours and visit the writing center for individual attention.

Overall, for both teachers and students, the system's weaknesses are far outweighed by its strengths. As a teacher, I like it because it allows me to better model the way a writer reads writing. Students are able to see what questions need to be asked in response to a particular piece, learn how to mix praise and criticism, and so on. And if there is something that needs to be said about a paper and students are not saying it, I can be certain it gets said. So, the more teacher-centered method is actually an advantage. On the other hand, if the students are doing well on their own, I may let them lead—I can adapt my teaching style to the situation.

It is less work, too. Once students understand the

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system, they tend to take responsibility for it. Recently, I had a class that had 21 drafts and photocopies ready for 21 workshop slots. It is a joy to come to class on a workshopping day, find the chairs already circled, and see the selected students distributing their photocopies. (Occasionally, without warning, a student will not be ready; but if we have at least two drafts, we can have a good workshop.)

In addition, students like the system. First, it allows them to socialize as a group in a mature, productive manner. (I often have 75% of the class comment at least once.) Second, they learn about the assignment. I regularly hear students say that these workshops really help. Third, they have some freedom regarding when and how much to participate, and a bit less responsibility and anxiety since the teacher serves as sort of a safety net. Finally, they feel it is fair. Everyone does an equal amount of work. The complaints have become compliments. Lottery-based, whole-class workshopping is now a permanent feature of my writing class.

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Quilting Enhances Learning and Enthusiasm

African American Studies 101 has been taught at Richland Community College since the early 1970's. Enrollment has fluctuated from semester to semester, and until the last few years the majority of the students have been African Americans. We have achieved increased enrollment and an improved racial mix with two specific learning initiatives—making an African American Heritage quilt and presenting the quilt to the community at a Kwanzaa ceremony designed and sponsored by the class.

Fall 1995, the students were asked to design felt blocks depicting contributions made by African Americans. Three industrious students brought in their well-designed, beautiful blocks right away. These visual aids inspired and helped others design their own blocks. Students began to cooperate with each other in completing the task. Three students held sessions in their homes to help other students; students volunteered to sew the designs onto blocks for each other. As a result, 30 blocks were completed, and a few students made more than one. Two students solicited assistance from friends and work colleagues to do the quilting.

It was a mad rush getting the quilt ready for its presentation as a zawadi—gift—to the community at the Kwanzaa ceremony. Students volunteered to be on various ceremony committees: program, food, decorations, entertainment, and artifacts. Each student could invite seven guests and was responsible for decorating his/her own table. Students donated all of the food but meat and drink. They solicited enough artifacts to fill seven eight-foot tables. Many of the students wore African-ethnic attire or attire appropriate for the time period of the quilt.

Over 250 students and community residents attended the ceremony. The African-American Heritage Quilt became a teaching tool and traveled throughout the community college district. Several of the students volunteered to travel with the quilt and make the presentations.

As a result of the success of the first quilt, a second quilt was made during fall 1996. A grant from the Decatur Area Arts Council supported an artist in residence. Students met at her home on weekends, stayed after class, and met at each other's homes to complete the task. Students brought their blocks to class and explained their significance. The quilting equipment remained in the Learning Resources Center so that students could work during their spare time.

The quilt-making exercises were successful; students and professor agreed that the task:

a. developed collaborative and cooperative learning skills
b. built an awareness of the contributions of African Americans
c. helped build self-confidence in students who thought they could not accomplish the task
d. demonstrated to the community the level of commitment and talent which exists at a community college
e. established a tradition of passing on African American history, and
f. established a learning community.

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Developing Internet Skills

"You can find more information at their web site on the Internet." Many instructors assume that students know how to access and navigate the Internet, but may be surprised to learn that students' skills are not very well developed after all.

In the text for my introductory mass communication course, one chapter is devoted to the Internet; without question, students find this chapter the most interesting. However, prior to beginning any discussion, I conduct a survey and assess students' experiences with the Internet. Surprisingly, most students indicate they have little or no previous experience.

Knowing how to turn on a computer and access the Internet may be what some students mean when they say they "have experience" using the Internet, but it is important to know if they have engaged in serious academic research, sent and received e-mail, subscribed to newsgroups, and the like.

It is important that students be given the opportunity to gain purposeful Internet experience. Devoting one or two class sessions to various facets of the Internet (using search engines, newsgroups, listservs, e-mail, IRC, etc.) is not going to give students all the information and tools they need, but devoting some class time to developing Internet skills is a step in the right direction. For example, demonstrating proper methods of using search engines will not ensure that all students will search the Internet efficiently forevermore, but it will provide them with opportunities to identify and begin to develop these skills. Moreover, hands-on activities following instruction will provide critical reinforcement.

One useful assignment I always make is the "Internet Scavenger Hunt." I give students a list of 10 questions covering a wide variety of topics and a list of search engines. They must use the search engines and the World Wide Web to find answers to at least five of the questions. Recent questions addressed inventions ("Who invented the helicopter?"), trivia ("Who was the voice of Rocky on the 'Rocky and Bullwinkle Show'?"), and music ("What is the birthdate of Eddie Vedder, the lead singer of Pearl Jam?"). In order to receive full credit for their answers, students must identify the search engine and the keywords they used, the location (page number) of the answer, and the answer.

Obviously, the primary goal of this assignment is that students learn by actively compieting the work. Students get on the web and use it in a supervised setting, feel the joys (and frustrations) of using search engines to find information, and gain experience in choosing the proper keywords to be used in a search. Students are encouraged to use some of the search-narrowing methods covered in class—e.g., using quotation marks around an exact phrase they want to find in a search. They find, in some cases, that there is conflicting information.

Perhaps most important is that students discover they may have to use more than one search engine or different keywords to find the information they seek. Many students enter my class thinking that any one search engine—Yahoo, Alta Vista, Lycos, etc.—covers the entire Internet. They find, however, that by switching to a different search engine, often using the same keywords, they find different (and often more useful) information.

In addition, students learn that the WWW is not the only Internet application useful in educational research. Other applications such as e-mail and newsgroups/discussion groups give students access to resources they would not be able to locate otherwise.

I use this personal example about a project of my own in a course I recently completed. The project required me to use the Macintosh-based program of HyperCard, but our campus only utilizes IBM-compatible machines. I wondered if there was a way to convert the program from the Macintosh-based platform to one that was PC-compatible. Over the course of six to eight months, I consulted with several knowledgeable computer science and communication resources on campus and in the area; most agreed there should be a way to do it, but no one knew how. Then one day while browsing the newsgroups, I discovered multimedia productions and HyperCard groups. I posted a question asking if anyone knew how to convert such a document. Within four days, I had responses from all over the world, the most useful of which came from a computer science professor at a Belgian university.

While students should be encouraged to have a

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healthy skepticism about information gleaned from the Internet, discussing this skepticism provides an opportunity to emphasize the value of confirming information by double-checking sources. One question in the "Internet Scavenger Hunt" assignment—"What is the birthdate of Eddie Vedder, the lead singer of Pearl Jam?"—illustrates this point. There are several sources on the WWW which include his birthday, but they do not agree about his birth year. Pointing out these differences confirms that there are no "absolutes" in information sources on the WWW and that there is value in verifying information.

Moreover, it is always useful for instructors to learn more about Internet technology and techniques. Some may feel they are behind the curve with computers and the Internet, and perhaps a noncredit class or an in-house workshop would be helpful.

It is unrealistic to expect that spending one or two class sessions on the topic of the Internet or giving an assignment requiring Internet research will equip students with all the knowledge they will ever need. But providing guided instruction, demonstrations, and practice in using the Internet, on a regular basis, will give students the opportunity to develop proper and useful research strategies of their own.

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Using the WWW: Inspiring the Uninspired Reader

Using cyberspace in lieu of a regular college textbook to teach critical reading skills to uninspired developmental students seems to work! These students have spent years in the educational system; they are unmotivated, uninspired, frustrated, and skeptical when enrolling in yet another reading course. When they enter my classroom, they immediately learn that something will be different. There is no textbook; instead, they hear about the World Wide Web, e-mail, cyberspace, and web pages.

Students are introduced to cyberspace with the *San Antonio Express-News* and *Newsweek* on-line. Weekly quizzes and daily assignments are posted on my website. Reading *Newsweek* articles on current affairs has taught students that critical reading can be fun, entertaining, painless, interesting, and relevant.

E-mail is used to "talk back" to the editors of the local newspaper and *Newsweek*, and to communicate with me and other students in the class.

Integrating technology into the reading curriculum has given my students a new start and a new hope that reading and using new technology are not out of their grasp. And, my desire for my students to become lifelong learners and readers moves closer to reality.

Ann Weesner, *Associate Professor, Reading and Education*

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A Hybrid Environment for Student Success: Combining the Worlds of Business and Education

Such jargon as "performance-based compensation," "skills-based pay," broadbanding," lateral moves," and "flattened organizational charts" indicate that the business world is giving "A's" to valuable employees. Businesses are not looking only at the number of clock hours or job descriptions of employees, but at the levels and ranges of their productivity and skills. Instructors, of course, have always judged student performance by awarding grades. Now many colleges are being tested on their performance and their funding levels are indicative of their "grades."

Education is no stranger to business strategies; colleges already acknowledge work-related experience in awarding credit hours, team assignments, off-site assignments, teleconferencing, and distributed learning. Real-time experiences have students leaving their classrooms for "city as text" courses, ghetto enrichment experiences, and internships in external work environments.

Will this trend of cross-fertilization between education and business increase student motivation and performance in college and later in the work environment? Will this "partnership" produce learning strategies that can be implemented in classrooms? Most importantly, what skills will the student "product" need to possess? The answers to these questions can help describe a successful hybrid (business and education) classroom.

In this hybrid classroom environment, students would be expected to process information as would employees. Ideal students would accept responsibilities for their education as though "their jobs were on the line." Students would have to identify learning tasks, develop the scope of learning tasks, assess accurate and complete information concerning these tasks, and organize and integrate assessed information into projects that display appropriate outcomes of learning tasks. If such students could be developed, is the goal worth working toward? If the answer is yes, then responsibility for producing them must be borne in part by instructors and learning institutions. Some of these responsibilities could play out as follows:

Information access and evaluation. Students, as well as instructors, will need to be information providers. Students will be expected to find, evaluate, and synthesize materials for their own learning experiences. Students often are more able to find information than they are able to evaluate it. Students who are adept at getting information from the Internet, for example, will have to be instructed in discerning trash from treasures. In the ethics course that I teach, critical evaluation of data and arguments coincide with evaluation of ethical content of material. Students would be able to take a course in learning to access and evaluate electronic information. Instructors, in general, would have the responsibility to drive students toward current resources, not just on reserve in the college library but in files in the global village. For example, having a "hot room" wired for access to the Internet during class time would allow the instructor to illustrate sources of information other than those in textbooks.

Responsibility for primary sources. Students should use primary source materials that will prepare them to assess data, develop critical perspectives, or practice skills encountered in disciplines. Medical journals, business spreadsheets, and governmentally published reports would allow students to encounter actual and multidimensional field experiences. In ethics courses, for example, instruction could include actual court cases to illustrate reasoning courts might use to identify moral issues.

Problem solving. Knowledge bases should be used in courses as materials for problem-solving and developing skills. Exercises using these knowledge bases should be specific and goal-oriented (to learn to graph results of experiments, assemble materials for debate, etc.). Goals should be shared—that is, students need to see that skills, not simply grades, are important. Language and math skills (desired by businesses who want their employees to be able to write or read technical manuals) will be directed toward problem solving. Connecting and/or juxtaposing ideas in order to solve problems and demonstrate results of projects will determine grades (not simply finding one right

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answer on a multiple-choice exam). Student-initiated publications, art shows, and student government will be considered practical, not peripheral, problem-solving experiences.

Technology support and market research programs within educational institutions. Empowering students to take responsibility will be undermined unless institutions can furnish technological support, including people, programs, and equipment that support student and instructor initiatives. Many educational institutions have shown technological acuity in their market research programs (some more sophisticated than those used in business) that track graduates of their programs and the demands of the marketplace, and that give institutions feedback and information for improving the curriculum.

Town-gown interaction. More task forces of business and learning institutions will identify and demonstrate the advantages of town-gown relationships. At Santa Fe Community College, for example, special training programs have been designed for community businesses. Corporate interest in schools, such as those demonstrated by GTE and IBM, could be duplicated on a smaller scale with community businesses' participation. [With a grant from GTE, students in my ethics class were able to participate in a televised panel discussion about life and death issues. Since my students did not want to seem naive while talking with professionals on the panel, they diligently studied their readings, primarily primary materials including law journal articles.]

Despite a number of significant educational reforms, students often arrive at higher learning institutions without requisite preparation, motivation, or knowledge. Perhaps the ideal responsible student is to remain a figment of educators' imaginations. In the working world, however, those workers who most approximate this ideal will be the ones taking home paychecks—and will be the ones remembering and advertising their alma mater.

Barbara Kramer, *Instructor, Humanities and Ethics*

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Nursing Clinicals: For Fun and Information

As instructors of a sophomore-level nursing class, we decided to schedule a clinical out-rotation day to inform the public about the health resources in our county, increase community awareness of our successful nursing program, and develop a professional image within our community.

We wanted our nursing students to visit health care resources within the community, develop their interaction skills, increase their knowledge of the county's resources, and have fun, too. It was decided that students would travel in groups of three or four throughout the county, each group pursuing an area of the members' collective interest. They would arrange appointments for conducting interviews, discuss the health resources with the staff of targeted facilities, and write articles about the resources available at various sites. Six hours or one clinical day would be allotted to finishing the project.

Allowing students to choose an area that most appealed to them appeared to be a useful strategy. Choices included: (1) acute care, (2) emergency care, (3) health department services, (4) home health agencies, (5) mental health services, (6) outpatient health services, (7) school services, (8) senior citizen services, and (9) social services.

The students created a booklet of valuable information about available resources, designed the cover, and titled the book, *The Potpourri of Resources of Breathitt County*; the instructors edited and organized the students' work. The local newspaper published a feature article about the project and spread the word about this gift to the community. The book is available in the Breathitt County Library and the Library of Lees College Campus of Hazard Community College as a public resource document.

We plan to include adjoining counties in future projects in other classes, increase communitywide participation in our nursing program, and continue to train professional and knowledgeable registered nurses for the community.

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Shooting the Essay

Form and content make up the material world. And we all know that writing matters; writing *is* matter. Why, then, is it so difficult for students to see that form is every bit as essential as content, that the way something is written is equal to (or greater in importance than) what the writing is about? Many students come into my classes unable to analyze the form of an essay and with little understanding of why it is important to do so.

For one of their first exercises, my Writing I students read another student's essay that provides a good model for studying form and has content that is relevant. The story is "Thick Sliced Bologna," by Bill Ferguson. Bill wrote about the relationship he had with his grandfather, especially the fishing trips they took together, when they sat by the stream talking, occasionally fishing, and always eating thick sliced bologna sandwiches. Bill reveals in the conclusion that he didn't really care for these sandwiches but ate them anyway to please his grandfather.

The content of Bill's story is easy to discuss since it is about a relationship most students can understand. And when Bill learns from his grandmother that his grandfather has a fatal illness, students also can easily understand how it is that our parents teach us how to live while our grandparents teach us how to die. The content, then, is easy. But what about form? How is writing structured into an introduction, body, and conclusion?

It has proved instructive to look at Bill's story (and later at the students' own essays) as if it were a film script. Looking at how a filmmaker would instruct a camera person to shoot the story not only reveals the form of the essay in a dramatic fashion but also demonstrates two aspects of writing often lacking in student essays: (1) physical details that produce images for the reader and (2) a sentence style that is varied and rhythmic, producing movement that engages the reader through form rather than content. Here are the first few sentences of Bill's story:

> The fraying edges and scuffed finish distort the photo, but since I know what to look for, the picture is crystal clear. The young Marine is frozen proudly in his dress uniform. Brass buttons, polished to perfection, line his breast. The royal blue jacket fits him like a glove. Beneath his snowy white hat, his young face yields a slight smile. The smile is quite familiar. I think about him often, not as the young Marine in the photograph, but as my grandfather.

Having the students look at the details that Bill provides interests them very little. However, having them analyze these sentences in terms of how they might be filmed interests them enormously.

First, the camera zooms in, giving us an extreme close-up of the "fraying edges and scuffed finish" of the photo. The camera moves out a little to reveal the whole photo: "the young Marine...in his dress uniform." Then another zoom to an extreme close-up that reveals the polished brass buttons, then a zoom out a little to show the man in the jacket. Then there is a movement inward to show his face, then another extreme close-up to show the marine smiling. And then, finally, the camera gives us an establishing, medium shot that reveals Bill holding the photograph.

The camera's movement provides the opportunity to talk about induction and deduction: the camera begins with the details and then reveals the completed scene, rather than starting with the establishing shot and moving to the revealing details. But, more important, seeing the writing in terms of filmmaking does two things that are important for student writers.

First, it gives them an easy way to analyze writing, introducing them to the need to distinguish form from content. And, second, it gives them practice in writing what I call the Basic Academic Sentence: their opinion plus quoted textual evidence. Most of my students are good enough at summaries. Some are good at giving detailed expression to their likes and dislikes. But very few have had any practice in writing the kinds of sentences that they will write throughout their entire academic career—i.e., their opinions supported by evidence quoted from a text.

An even more interesting quality of students' analyses emerges after more practice in considering writing as film scripting. They begin to understand and

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appreciate how the form of sentences, individually and collectively, influence the reader. And once they begin to think in terms of the reader, they are on their way to becoming writers instead of translators. Translators are lucky if they make connection with readers; they merely write down the thoughts that were in their heads. Writers rely on their knowledge of form and how form determines content.

Bill's essay has incessant movement. And this, I explain, is what *they* expect, not what I expect. They are accustomed to rapid movement. After all, they are movement experts, influenced by television, especially commercials, where lack of movement is fatal. And once they really understand that good writing is not good because some teacher claims it is—but that good writing is detailed, imagistic, rhythmic, approaching at times the rapid-shot sequence of television commercials—then they no longer are dependent upon me. They depend on their own ability to influence the reader.

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